

[Jai Ma Music](#)

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A West-East Connection

Rudyard Kipling said, "The East is East and the West is West and never the twain shall meet." Should Mr. Kipling be living today - and maybe he is - what would he think of this technological age and its effect on the amalgamation of thought and lifestyles around the globe? Perhaps he would conclude or at least consider, as many have, that there's a massive hybrid in the making. Although many aspects of life necessarily maintain their unaltered distinction regardless of changing times, today's ever-advancing systems of communication and travel continue to fracture previously immutable separations imposed by the world's geography and politics. The result has been a multi-dimensional expansion of physical and mental horizons.

Meet Bob Kindler. He is one of a growing number of people in the West who are taking a liking to Eastern music and mysticism. Bob, a musician highly accomplished in the Western tradition, was inspired to learn and perform the ancient music of India in his own unique way. Because of his previous training, he was able to accomplish this most successfully. In 1980 he conceived and founded Jai Ma Music, an uncustomary guild of artists "dedicated to the creative energy flowing from the Absolute Reality through the mediums of music, dance, poetry and other fine arts." This group's distinctive yet highly professional performance has been well accepted by Hindus and Westerners alike who have seen and heard the Jai Ma music concerts and ceremonies in Hawaii and the continental USA, as well as in the greater Pacific region and in India.

Bob was born and bred to play music, having begun his classical training as a cellist at a very early age. He completed his schooling at Portland State University in Oregon where he was principal cellist of the famous Portland Youth Philharmonic. He was twice awarded the coveted Tanglewood Scholarship, which took him to the East coast to study orchestral techniques, chamber music, music theory, and

composition with some of the foremost conductors and musicians of our times including Igor Stravinsky, Leonard Bernstein, Eric Leinsdorf, Seiji Ozawa and Gunther Schuller. As a jazz musician, he has appeared in concert with Chick Corea, Oregon and Darius Brubeck. In the Asian Indian musical tradition he has performed with sarodist Vasant Rai and sitarist Ravi Shankar. He has also played solo cello with dance master Rudolf Nureyev.

Bob is no longer spending eight hours a day in a practice room as he did for a large part of his life. But as a multi-instrumentalist (cello, guitar, autoharp and vocal), vocalist, composer, arranger, sound engineer, producer and recording artist, he keeps busy. Besides an active concert schedule, Bob produces, arranges and engineers many albums for artists of all musical persuasions at Hawaii Artists Recording Studio, a fine audio facility which he owns and operates in conjunction with Global Pacific Records.

Yet, with all this euphonious initiative, Bob's music plays second fiddle to his spiritual pursuits. Ironically, the fiddle - cello, that is - plays now as much as it ever did, since it has become an important part of his spiritual life. Even in his beginning years of personal sadhana. Bob saw the interrelationship of the mystical and the musical, especially in the development of concentration.

Spiritual evolvment is always up to the individual," he says. "So, mind control is very important. For me learning the cello went hand in hand with the development of spiritual discipline. The cello taught me the art of concentration."

Bob began his spiritual life when he moved to Hawaii in 1970. He had just read The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, and although these teachings had captured his heart, he did not know of the Vedanta Societies started by Ramakrishna's foremost disciple, Swami Vivekananda. So, he immersed himself in hatha yoga and pranayama disciplines, developing casual associations with Pir Vilayat Khan (a Sufi leader), Swami Satchitananda, Sri Chinmoy and Baba Ram Das. In the late 70's, he studied the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, and later practiced Tibetan Buddhism. Finally, he committed himself to "the Sanatana Dharma" and met Swami Asehananda of the Ramakrishna Order, one of the last living disciples of Sri Sarada Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, known to thousands as Holy Mother. Bob and his wife were initiated by the Ramakrishna Order.

Bob approaches the presentation in the performances of Jai Ma Music like he practices meditation and worship.

"I give a lot of thought to the scriptures that I use and the translation of those scriptures - and the way that the whole thing comes across," he says. "Our presentation is not just Bhakti, it involves all of the four yogas presented through dance, poetry and music. The devotion is there, but that's not all. With our interest in spiritual life, we approach our performances with equal portions of jnana and bhakti."

Having grown up in a world of accomplished professional musicians, Bob sees some inherent problems in the music world, and is therefore all the more motivated to spiritualize his music. As he puts it: "There is a tendency among musicians and artists to become somewhat egotistical. I noticed that early on and that's what so attracted me to Sri Ramakrishna's teachings concerning name and fame. Sri Ramakrishna taught that everything came from the Divine Mother and everything must all go back to Her. So, when we perform, we are performing for God."

Bob is fully confident that the future will bring global spiritualization of the arts, but he is philosophical in his view: "When it is time to happen it will. There is nothing new under the sun. We say we are creating, but we are not. Even in the idea of being an instrument, there is some ego present. We are simply offering things back to God."

Jai Ma has just returned from a performance tour of USA Hindu temples, schools and New Age Centers. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that they have been invited back in May of 1989. For further information write: Jai Ma Music, P.O. Box 359, Pearl City, Hawaii, 96782. Phone: (808) 621-7948.

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