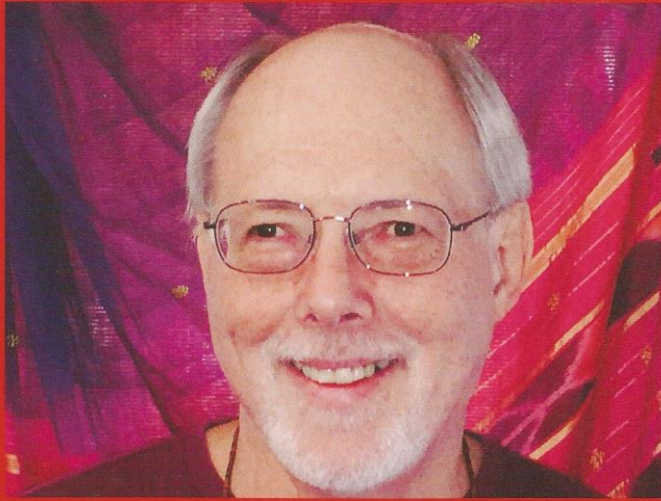


Chanting is Universal! ***Jon Seskevich & Friends***



www.universalchanting.com

www.englishchalisa.com

Across spiritual traditions, singing repetitive sacred phrases is used as a way to quiet and protect the mind; to lift, open, and heal the heart; and to bring spiritual connection to one's life.

An English version of the "Hanuman Chalisa" is featured on this release as the first English recording for this beloved Indian hymn written centuries ago by the saint composer, Tulsidas.

Jon Seskevich was first introduced to chanting by Ram Dass with the *From Bindu to Ojas* record album. Since then, he has seen a practical intersection related to kirtan across spiritual traditions while deepening his own practice. On the *Chanting is Universal!* CD, Jon and friends sing traditional examples of Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, and Christian chants. With heart and spirit, Jon and friends create a unique and uplifting kirtan experience.

"The last few years I have been extensively chanting the 'Hanuman Chalisa' so I wanted to begin and to end this CD with a cross-cultural mix of the Chalisa," said Seskevich. The first tune is a special English translation of the Hanuman Chalisa which helps us in the West understand the meaning of the 40 verses sung in Hindi! Originally, I began to record the English Hanuman Chalisa to help me memorize the words, while I was working on this CD, but later it took on a life of its own. I have some great friends who play music and/or sing and I love the track so much so I put it first on this CD. After that I decide the next four chants should come from the Ram Dass and the Neem Karoli Baba satsangs. The third track, "Crystal Tears," was written by Jai Uttal. Then come two chants from the Native American tradition. I am one-eighth Native American and wanted to honor this part of my background. The next two chants are from the Theravadan and Tibetan Buddhist traditions since they have most spoken to me. The next two chants are from the Christian tradition, my religious upbringing. Finally, the CD ends with three Hindu chants sung with the Stillhouse Bottom Band, a kicking old-time North Carolina group of fine musicians. The last track on this CD, it's back to the "Hanuman Chalisa" in Hindi with Stillhouse in a very fast old-time almost rap version. That was a lot of fun to record. I hope people have fun listening, and dancing!

For more detail related to each track see below.

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1. English Hanuman Chalisa (Tulsi Das, Lamb, Seskevich) 8:40

This English translation of the Hanuman Chalisa, a beloved 40 verse Hindi prayer sung all over the world, was done by Sadhu Ramdas Lamb in 1971 at the request of Neem Karoli Baba. They were at the Hanuman Temple in Vrindavan, India. Maharaji wanted the Westerners to know the meaning of the chant they were practicing. Used by kind permission. A special boon with this translation is that Lamb wrote it so that any melody in which the Chalisa is sung in Hindi, can also be used now to chant in English. Today Ramdas Lamb PhD is a professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Hawaii.

Instrumentalists, Vocalists (Recorded by a group Jon likes to call The Sita-Ram Express.):

Jon Seskevich: vocal, harmonium, and mountain dulcimer.

Danielle Koppel: Vocal

Chris Mankoff: Violin

Mark Smith: Guitar

K. Sridhar: Manjira

Munsie Davis: Tamboura

Kapila: Kohl

Produced: Jon, Meghan Puryear & K. Sridhar

2. Sita Ram Traditional chant from India 8:41

Sita represents the soul's longing for union with God. This chant hails the victory of their reunion.

Sita Ram, Sita Ram, Sita Ram, Jai Sita Ram.

3. Crystal Tears (Words of Neem Karoli Baba adapted by Jai Uttal) 3:52

Used with permission. <http://JaiUttal.com>

I am like the wind, no one can hold me.

I belong to everyone, no one can own me.

The whole world is my home, all are my family.

I live in every heart, I will never leave thee...

Oh, oh, oh, crystal tears. Oh, oh, oh, taking away my fears.

4. Sri Ram Jai Ram Bhajan Traditional chant from India (arranged J. Seskevich) 5:20

This chant combines a few of the melodies learned by Jon in groups with Ram Dass. This is a chant of Hanuman, who is revered as the perfect servant of God, like the Holy Spirit in Christianity. Hanuman is a master of the types of yoga related to service and devotion as ways for a living soul to have union with God.

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram (Victory to God, Hail God.)

5. Wakan Tanka Traditional Native American Chant 5:27

This Dakota Sioux chant reminds us of our sacred relationship with Nature, Great Spirit, and the Great Mystery.

Wakan Tanka, oh chi malaya oyate wana oh achenta x 2

Oh mother earth, please teach us to be humble.

Like you are when the feet of beings walk upon you.

Oh Great Spirit be merciful upon us, that all people, we may live.

6. Fly Like Eagles Traditional Native American Chant 5:58

This chant reminds us that the Holy Spirit is present in all our endeavors, in all places, and at all times.

O ee h che chia ya. Oh-ee-i-o x 2
We all fly like eagles high up in the sky.
Circling the universe, on wings of pure light.
Where we walk is Holy, sacred is the ground,
Forest, mountain, ocean. Listen to the sound.
Breathe. Live. Listen. Sing. Work. Heal. Die. Love.
O ee h che chia ya. Oh-ee-i-o x 2

7. Mantra of the Green Tara Tibetan Buddhist Traditional Chant 8:07

Great devotion to the Mother Tara. She represents the energy of divine compassion in Buddhism. We started with the drones of the tamboura and harmonium. The women's voices then came. The rest of the instruments and the men's voices all joined together. The chant ends with the men's voices.

Om Tare Tu Tare Ture Swaha

8. Anicca (Impermanence) Theravada Buddhist Traditional Chant 6:20

John Orr, a former Buddhist monk and Jon begin and end this acapella chant of release, letting go into the truth of change. (In the Pali language, the V is pronounced like W.)

Anicca vatha sankhara uppadava dhammino
Uppajjitva nirujja chanti, te sang vupa samo sukho
All things are impermanent. They arise and pass away.
Having arisen they come to an end. A man or woman who realizes this has pure bliss.

9. Jesus Is on the Main Line Traditional Folk Song 6:55

Arrangement and additional lyrics by Jon Seskevich and Mark Smith.

Jesus is on the main line, Tell Him what you want. x 3
You can call Him up and tell Him what you want.
If your sick and you want to get better, Tell Him what you want. X3 Chorus.
If you want his kingdom, tell Him what you want... X3 Chorus.
You don't need a little cell phone you just tell Him what... X3
You don't need no Visa no Mastercard, just tell Him... X3
You don't need no email, no internet you just tell Him what you want. X 3. Chorus.

Chants 2-9 Instrumentalists, Vocalists

Jon Seskevich: Harmonium. Lead vocals. Hand drum #5
Mark Smith: Guitar. Vocals
Larry Taylor: Bouzuki. Eagle Bone Flute. Water drum. Ney.
Eric Pritchard: Violin. Vocals.
Chris Mankoff: Violin.
Andrew Pilant: Tabla and percussion.
Cheryle Moody Pope: Shakaree. Leadocals #6
Lynda Aikman-Smith: Tamboura, Frame drum.

John Orr: Lead vocal #8
Raymond Smith: 12-string guitar. Vocals.
Laurie Lindgren: Percussion. Flute. Vocals.
Jim Ramdas: Frame drum. Vocals.
Randy Dodd: Gourd rattle. Meditation bell. Vocals.
Farrunnissa Lila Rosa: Tar. Dumbek. Tambourine. Rattle. Clave. Vocals

Chorus

Jane Adams, Lynda Aikman-Smith, Libby Capaldi, Randi Davenport, Pali Delevitt, Walton Deva, Marcia Eagle, Lori Fendell, Anne Furze, Mindy Gellen, Mary Grigolia, Marilyn Grubbs, Bobbie Hayes, Cindy Hoff, NurJehan Kavlock, Jenny Knoop, Carole Mathison, Jonathan Maupin, Melanie Maupin-Smith, Ashley McCormick, Cheryle Moody Pope, Frances O'Halleron, John Orr, Joseph Phister, Michael Pope, Page Potter, Robert Short.

Produced: Jon Seskevich, Jon Smith, Larry Taylor and Farrunnissa Lila Rosa

10. Jesus Before Breakfast 5:37

The traditional tune "Whiskey Before Breakfast" is joined with the Latin sacred phrases of the Christian tradition: "Kyrie eleison" and "Christe eleison" which mean: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy. The second part is the prayer: "Dona Nobis Pacem," grant us peace. There is something profoundly healing for the family when one substitutes "God" for "whiskey" before breakfast!

Instrumentalists, Vocalists,

Betsy Bickel & Marilyn Grubbs, lead vocals.
Jon Seskevich, AC Bushnell, Jim Beckwith, vocals.
AC Bushnell: Fiddle.
Bobb Head: Banjo and mandolin.
Robbie Link: Bass.
Bill Parsons: Guitar.

11. Jimmy Johnson Gopala 3:04

Gopala is baby Krishna. Krishna's mother is Devaki. Ananda is the word for bliss. This kirtan is about the bliss of the mother that comes from the unconditional love for her baby. This was the first BlueGrass Kirtan track we recorded. It is from the traditional Appalachian tune "Jimmy Johnson."

Gopala Gopala Devakinandana Gopala

12. Shiva at the Falls of Richmond 3:38

This chant expresses devotion to Shiva, the Lord of Change and Impermanence. "Falls of Richmond" is a traditional old time banjo tune.

Om Namah Shivaya. Shiva Shiva Shiva Shiva. Om Namah Shivaya

13. Old-Time Hanuman Chalisa (Rap) 3:38

This tune is a wild sound painting. Like a river flows, what is experienced in the present moment will not be repeated in exactly the same way. The old-time tune Cluck Old Hen has been transformed here by AC and the Stillhouse Bottom Band, with Jon and Jim on vocals, all merging with the Great River of the Divine.

Instrumentalists, Vocalists,

11-12: Jon Seskevich, AC Bushnell, vocals.
13. Jon Seskevich Vocal.
11-13: AC Bushnell (Fiddle), Bobb Head (Bass), Alan Julich (Banjo), Mark Weems (Guitar)

Produced: Jon, AC and Jerry Brown.