

# Vandana

Devotional Mantras & Sacred Healing Prayers



Stevin McNamara

featuring Mala Ganguly & Christo Pellani



# Vandana:

## Devotional Mantras & Sacred Healing Prayers

*by Stevin McNamara*

Having recorded eight albums strongly influenced by North Indian music, I felt inspired to explore the ancient tradition of mantra in a form that captures the spirit of the Vedic tradition, and to present the mantras in a musical setting with utmost integrity and respect to their origins, and in a way that is universally appealing to both the eastern and the western ear. Thus all the pieces are set to specific Indian ragas and talas which dictate the mood of the mantra. However, there is also western harmony and rhythm present which hopefully will make it appeal to the western ear as well.

The primary intent was to make positive and uplifting music for the difficult and negative times we are faced with these days. I hope that we have succeeded.

To achieve all this I have been most fortunate to collaborate with some highly talented and inspired musicians, both from India and the USA, namely my collaborators **Mala Ganguly** and **Christo Pellani**, as well as special guest artists **Steve Gorn** and **Subir Adhikari**.

At the heart of the album is the exquisite voice of **Mala Ganguly** – who brings a majestic and authentic feeling of her Indian roots, along with her outstanding vocal performances – and **Christo Pellani**, the “King of Rhythm,” who plays all the sound healing instruments and drum foundations under the compositions.



# About Mantras, Vandanas and the Music

Going back to the Vedic era, Indian music has its origin in devotion and prayer.

**Mantras** have always been an essential part of the Indian spiritual tradition. Their purpose is to concentrate the mind that is normally scattered throughout the senses and to return to a focused state at the center. The mantra also carries a spiritual intent - which is to evoke a higher state of consciousness - to connect one to the Divine. Many ancient mantras are intended to evoke the blessings of a particular deity.

**Vandanas** are prayers, sung as a form of devotion, adoration and reverence to the Divine.

Each composition is presented in the Indian form of **Alap** (no rhythm) and **Gat** (main theme with rhythm).

.....

## Musicians

**Stevin McNamara:** *Nylon-string guitar, 12-string guitar, bass*

**Mala Ganguly:** *Vocals, harmonium, tanpura, swarmandal and conch*

**Christo Pellani:** *Many drums, percussion, bells, sound healing instruments*

## Special Guest Artists

**Steve Gorn:** *Bansuri (Indian flute)*

**Subir Adhikari:** *Tabla*



# Mantras & Vandanas Meaning and Translation

## Gayatri Mantra - Embracing Sacred Divine

The Gayatri mantra is one of the oldest and most powerful of Sanskrit mantras. It is believed that by chanting the Gayatri mantra and firmly establishing it in the mind, if you carry on your life and do the work that is ordained for you, your life will be full of happiness.

Sanskrit:	English Translation:
Aum Bhur Bhuvah Swaha, Tat Savitur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi, Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat	Oh God, the Protector, the basis of all life, Who is self-existent, Who is free from all pains and Whose contact frees the soul from all troubles, Who pervades the universe and sustains all, the Creator and Energizer of the whole universe, the Giver of happiness, Who is worthy of acceptance, the most excellent, Who is pure and the purifier of all, let us embrace that very God, so that he may direct our mental faculties in the right direction.

## Healing Eyes of Shiva: Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra

Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra is also called Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra or Rudra Mantra, referring to the furious aspect of Lord Shiva (Mahadeva), and alluding to Lord Shiva's three eyes. The 3rd eye (the faculty of insight and intuition) is said to be located in the space between the eyebrows and is "opened" when one experiences spiritual awakening. Along with the Gayatri mantra, it holds the highest place among the many Sanskrit mantras used for meditation, contemplation, and healing.

Sanskrit:	English Translation:
<i>Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardhanam; Urvaarukamiva Bandhanaan Mrityormuksheeya Maamritaat</i>	We worship the three-eyed one who is fragrant, and who sustains all living beings. May he liberate us from (Samsara) death. May he (Lord Shiva) lead us to immortality, just as the cucumber is released from its bondage.

## Divine Mother: Mateshwari Vandana

Sanskrit:	English Translation:
<i>Mateshwari Jagdishwari,</i>	Oh Goddess of all, Oh overpowering omnipotent mistress of all,
<i>Hey Maatri Roop Mateshwari,</i>	Oh the masterly motherly form of all Gods,
<i>Mamtamayi Karunamayi,</i>	Oh inimitably maternal one, Oh compassionate one,
<i>Jaagjivani Sanjivani,</i>	Oh grantor of life, Oh the supreme reviving force of life,
<i>Samastra Jivaneshwari,</i>	Oh Goddess and molder of all human destinies,
<i>Kripalini Jaagtariini,</i>	Oh Goddess of all, Oh overpowering omnipotent mistress of all,
<i>Pratipal Bhuvan Hridyeshwari,</i>	Oh infinitely merciful one, Oh the destroyer of all worldly evil,
<i>Tamharini Shubhkar,</i>	Oh Goddess of all, Oh overpowering omnipotent mistress of all,
<i>Manmohani Vishveshari</i>	Oh the masterly motherly form of all Gods, Oh dispeller of all sloth and negativity, O priming force of all benevolence, Oh enchantress of all minds, Oh maternal form of all Gods, Oh Goddess of all, Oh overpowering omnipotent mistress of all, Oh the masterly mother form of all Gods

## Sacred Sharada: Devotional Saraswati Vandana

Sanskrit:	English Translation:
<i>Ya Kundendu Tusharahara Dhavala Ya Shubhra Vastravrita</i>	Salutations to Devi Saraswati, who is pure white like jasmine, with
<i>Ya Veena Varadanda Manditakara Ya Shveta Padmasana</i>	the coolness of the moon, brightness of snow and shines like a
<i>Ya Brahmachyuta Shankara Prabhritibihi Devaih Sada Pujita</i>	garland of pearls,
<i>Sa Mam Pattu Saravatee Bhagavatee Nihshesha Jadyapaha</i>	Who is covered with pure white garments, Whose hands are adorned by the veena and the boon-giving staff, Who is seated on the pure white Lotus, Who is always adored by Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva and other Devas, O Goddess Saraswati, please protect me and remove my ignorance completely.

# Track List

1. Gayatri Mantra - Embracing Sacred Divine – Alap 4:48  
*(Rag Bhimpalasi)*
  2. Gayatri Mantra - Embracing Sacred Divine 11:17  
*(Rag Bhimpalasi - Kaharwa Tal)*
  3. Sacred Sharada: Prayer to Saraswati - Stuti 4:25  
*(Rag Bageshree)*
  4. Sacred Sharada: Devotional Saraswati Vandana 5:00  
*(Rag Bageshree - Tintal)*
  5. Healing Eyes of Shiva: Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra - Alap 5:26  
*(Rag Bairagi)*
  6. Sacred Dance of Shiva - Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra 12:58  
*(Rag Bairagi - Kaharwa Tal)*
  7. Divine Mother: Mateshwari Vandana - Invocation 2:56  
*(Rag Bhairavi)*
  8. Divine Mother: Mateshwari Vandana 9:17  
*(Rag Bhairavi - Rupak Tal)*
  9. Three Eyes of Shiva: Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra-Healing Meditation Mix 18:16  
*(Rag Bairagi)*
  10. Healing Eyes of Shiva: Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Mantra - Extended Mix 18:16  
*(Rag Bairagi - Kaharwa Tal)*
  11. Sacred Divine: Gayatri Mantra - Deep Healing Mix 13:54  
*(Rag Bhimpalasi - Kaharwa Tal)*
  12. Divine Mother: Mateshwari Vandana - Extended Mix 11:56  
*(Rag Bhairavi - Rupak Tal)*
  13. Sacred Sharada: Devotional Saraswati Vandana - Extended Mix 9:59  
*(Rag Bageshree - Tintal)*
- Total Running time:** **128:34**  
*(2 hours 8 min 34 sec)*

# About the Artists



## Stevin McNamara

Stevin McNamara has been playing and recording music for over 50 years. He is in the unique position of being an accomplished composer, musician and a professional recording engineer. This gives him total freedom in any

music/recording environment.

Born in South Africa, Stevin started learning piano and guitar at the age of seven, and played solo and in bands all the way through high school. At the age of twenty-one, Stevin moved to the United States, where he had more formal training at Berklee College of Music in Boston. He has been involved in music ever since.

Although Stevin grew up with the sounds of African music, he also discovered Indian music in the early 70s and studied the sitar with Ram Chakravarty of Benares who was then professor of music at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. This diverse exposure to such a broad spectrum of music, ranging from world to pop, has contributed to the unique musical style he has developed over the years.

In the late 70s, after spending considerable time as a session musician in recording studios, Stevin became fascinated with what was happening on the "other side of the glass" – namely the recording process itself. This passion developed into a highly successful career as an audio engineer. He has worked in the fields of popular music, world, folk, jazz, film and television in top studios in South Africa, England and the United States. He is perfectly at home in any state-of-the-art recording facility or live sound scenario, even at stadium concert level. He is qualified to teach audio engineering at college level and was a faculty instructor at Full Sail University. Stevin has worked with such well-known producers as Robert John "Mutt" Lange and a huge spectrum of recording artists from Paul Winter to Tina Turner, and from Bryan Adams to Zakir Hussain.

He now lives in Ashland, Oregon, where he spends his time doing freelance recording, original music production, and live performances. Stevin has performed at several yoga festivals and has released eight solo albums on the White Swan Records and Sounds True labels.

*[yogitar.com](http://yogitar.com)*



## Mala Ganguly

Born in Kolkata, India, of a musical family, Mala began her first music instruction at the age of five. She later trained in classical North Indian vocal with Pundit A. T. Kanan and Professor Amiya Ranjan Bannerjee of the Bishnupur Gharana. She learned light music

from great vocalists and music directors in Kolkata, such as Himaghna Roy Chaudhury, Sudhin Das Gupta, Satinath Mukherjee, and Hemant Kumar. The late Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, the world renowned sarodist, founder, and president of the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Francisco, stated: *"Mala Ganguly is a highly accomplished vocalist as well as a skilled teacher of Indian music, whose work and artistry has received much appreciation from both the Indian and non-Indian communities."*

Widely acclaimed for her extraordinary vocal skill, Mala Ganguly is especially appreciated for her sweet timbre, flexibility, spontaneous complex vocal improvisation and technical virtuosity.

She gives lecture demonstrations at colleges and universities and performs worldwide.

Mala was a pioneer in the usage of Indian classical music in mainstream American commercials like "Nike" and the CBS movie *The Christmas Box*. As a touring and recording artist, Mala performs throughout North America. Her vast repertoire includes bhajans, geets, ghazals, thumris and all styles of Bengali singing.

As a SAG/AFTRA performer, she works regularly as a composer and singer for Hollywood movies, TV jingles, voice overs, and fusion music. She recently gave voice to the films *Mission Impossible 4*, *Big Bang Theory*, *Eat Pray Love*, *The Naughtiers* and *Outsourced*.

Mala is also the founder of The Surmala Music Foundation, which is dedicated to furthering the fine arts of India. Her original artwork has been exhibited in the Laguna Beach Arts Festival, in the Monrovia Arts Festival, in San Francisco and in Los Angeles. She specializes in producing one-of-a-kind commissioned paintings and composites.

[malaganguly.com](http://malaganguly.com)





## Christo Pellani

Christo Karam Pellani is an accomplished recording artist, producer, event coordinator and rhythm awareness/drum circle facilitator with extensive performance experience.

He is recognized internationally as a master drummer/percussionist, educator and certified sound healer. Christo was featured as one of ten "Unsung Drumming Heroes" of Los Angeles as chosen by BAM magazine. Equally proficient as a hand drummer and drum set performer, Christo is in high demand for facilitation, recording, instruction and accompaniment for expressive movement artists.

He has been a regularly featured performer at a variety of cultural music festivals, including the World Festival of Sacred Music, Bhakti Fest and Esalen Yoga Festival.



## Subir Adhikari

Sri Subir Adhikari is an Indian traditional tabla virtuoso of the Farukhabad Gharana, Gold Medalist (M.Mus), A-Grade artist of All India Radio & Doordarshan, and an Indian Council for Cultural Relations panel artist. He is the disciple and the only son of the late, legendary tabla player Benu Adhikari.

Besides being a solo tabla artist, he has received honors

He also has extensive film, TV and international concert performance credentials with a variety of world, rock, R&B and devotional music artists including Air Supply, Mary Wells, The Shirelles, Fabien Maman, Wade Preston, Leo Nocentelli, Nina Hagen, Breath of Life Tribe and many others. He played the very first rock concert in Hanoi, Vietnam, with Air Supply.

Christo's drumming and musical endeavors include master studies with various teachers in Africa, Brazil, India and Bali, and his interests and passions include world music, teaching and facilitating healing seminars at retreats and festivals, and traveling the world. He designed and markets a uniquely customized, hand-carved Balinese djembe drum. He maintains performance, music instruction and personal wellness practices in Los Angeles.

[soundformation.com](http://soundformation.com)

accompanying many renowned artists of different spheres; his many awards include the All India Radio Award, the H.M.V Talent Award, Uttar Bangla Padak from Bangladesh & Swami Prabhu Pada awards.

A regular participant in major Indian music festivals & conferences, including the National Program of Music, he has made several visits to the U.S. and to Bangladesh as a visiting faculty facilitator and artist.

[facebook.com/subir.adhikari.52](https://facebook.com/subir.adhikari.52)



## Steve Gorn

Steve Gorn is creating a new idiom, a music that combines the essence of classical Indian tradition with a contemporary world music sensibility. The strength of this music is grounded in a virtuoso mastery, generating a vibrant fusion, alive and accessible to western ears. From Indian classical music to world music and jazz projects with Paul Simon, Jack DeJohnette, Paul Winter and others, Steve infuses great mastery with a haunting, lyrical sweetness to bring the healing breath of the sacred to our demanding contemporary lives.

Steve's first steps on this path were taken as a young jazz musician studying composition at Penn State. He noticed how John Coltrane and Charles Lloyd had begun to incorporate aspects of Indian music into their playing. He investigated modal music and listened to Bismillah Khan who played the shenai (Indian oboe), and to Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan who were then only beginning to become known to western audiences.

Drawn by these sounds, he followed the music east and found himself in Benares, India, in 1969, in a boat on the Ganges with the famous sarangi master, Gopal Misra, listening to his classical raga float out over the water in the evening light. *"I suddenly saw how this music went beyond notes, beyond what we think of as music. How it is, in truth, a yoga, a form of meditation, devotion, a form of love."*

Steve Gorn's bansuri is featured on the 2011 Grammy-winning recording, *Miho – Journey to the Mountain*, with the Paul Winter Consort, and the Academy Award-winning documentary film, *Born into Brothels*. Steve has performed Indian classical music and new American music on the bansuri bamboo flute, soprano saxophone and clarinet in concerts and festivals throughout the world. He has also been featured on Grammy-nominated cds: Paul Simon's *You are the One*, and Angelique Kidjo's *Oyo*. His gurus are the late bansuri master Sri Gour Goswami of Kolkata and Pt. Raghunath Seth of Mumbai.

[stevegorn.com](http://stevegorn.com)



# Thank You

Heartfelt gratitude and immense thanks to **Mala Ganguly** for pouring your heart and soul into this body of work – and for choosing the mantras that we then made into musical performances. **Christo Pellani** for your amazing talent, invaluable contribution and for your friendship through our several musical journeys.

My deepest thanks to **Steve Gorn** and **Subir Adhikari**, who gave so generously of their incredible talents and passion.

Special thanks to my wife **Anamari** for all the years of incredible patience, love and support.

Special thanks to **Daniela Boifava** for the exquisite cover art.

And not least, very special thanks to **Parmita Pushman** at *White Swan Records*, for believing in this project and making it a reality.

# Credits

Arranged & produced by **Stevin McNamara**

Vocal arrangements by **Mala Ganguly** ~ Drum arrangements by **Christo Pellani**

Recorded by **Stevin McNamara** at Crystal Mountain Studio in Ashland, Oregon

Additional recording by **Christo Pellani** at Soundformation Studios and by **Stevin McNamara**  
at Surmala Studio in Los Angeles

Mixed and mastered by **Stevin McNamara** at Crystal Mountain Studio

Cover art & graphic design: **Daniela Boifava** ~ [visiongatedesign.com](http://visiongatedesign.com)

© 2019 White Swan Records ~ © FPR 6000 Music (ASCAP) Moon Over Hemlock Music (ASCAP)/

Administered by Criterion Music/Universal Music Publishing Group

All rights to the master recording licensed exclusively to:

White Swan Records, 6395 Gunpark Drive, Suite A, Boulder CO 80301 USA

[feedback@whiteswanrecords.com](mailto:feedback@whiteswanrecords.com) ~ [whiteswanrecords.com](http://whiteswanrecords.com)



[whiteswanrecords.com](http://whiteswanrecords.com)