

SHUNIA

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When was the last time music made you feel really good, inside and out? I can almost guarantee you that after you have heard **Shunia** you will be not only be singing their praises, but also their songs. There is an undeniable power in sound and in vibration. This concept has been known for centuries. There is power and energy in chant. We know this also. This power has been harnessed by mankind in many forms of religion and belief systems. And so, naturally, we come to know the power in the music. Shunia has more than competently expressed that essential capability in their music.

SHUNIA is a collaboration among vocalists **Lisa Reagan** and **Suzanne Jackson** and producer **Jamshied Sharifi**. It is eight tracks of high energy chants from various sources. East, west. Latin, Middle. North Africa. Everywhere. Inspiration comes from many places. It does not take a compass pointing to a certain direction to find the inspiration for this music, for it is easily found deep in every heart and openly in every spirit.

The opening number is called **Sa Re Sa Sa** and to me it is a production number. There is an infectious energy in this song as there is in all of the songs on this album. Repetitive, yes, but it gets a tempo going and exudes a positive vibe that makes you feel good. Is it not what music is supposed to do? Sa or God the Infinite is everywhere and as such we praise our God. Sa Re Sa Sa is a positive mantra. Let us sing!

The song **Breeze at Dawn** is inspired by a rather simple Rumi poem. This is a call to embrace the day. Do not let the light and energy of this day go unused by you. It is the Carpe Diem of another philosophy. It is just four simple lines, but the advice is priceless.

*“The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you. Don’t go back to sleep.
You must ask for what you really want. Don’t go back to sleep.
People are going back and forth across the door sill where the two worlds touch.
The door is round and open. Don’t go back to sleep”*

One of the unexpected pleasures on the album is a song called **Alleluia**. I say this from a westerner’s point of view. It was delightful to take a chant and make it into something grand and inspiring. The vocals on this one are enthralling. The power of the voices and instruments however, were transformative. A single word of praise is converted into a soul stirring prayer. This music bathes you in transcendent light. This was a favorite.

Beautiful flute takes flight in the opening of the tune **Akal**. Akal means timeless. Ever living. Eternal. This exquisite mantra to me is akin to a kind of keening, but in a positive sense. We do not recognize death here, but Everlasting Life. The vocal is melancholy and flowing. Shunia’s

use of the Italian phrase “risposa in pace”, rest in peace, is in no way a goodbye, but a fervent hope to be in the Arms of Light Forever.

The additional tracks are Har Hare Hari Wahe Guru, Ang Sang Wahe Guru, and Sa Ta Na Ma.

The last song, Sa Ta Na Ma is soft and meditative and worth mentioning as another favorite for me.

This remarkable recording is blessed with the talents of almost two dozen participants; musicians, engineers, producers, etc. Over all the music is rhythmic, rich, and lustrous with art and professionalism. The balance between vocals and music is faultless where neither overpowers the other. You get a windfall of equilibrium and light. One of my friends, a vocalist named Seay, once said to me that what makes some music different than others is intent. This music has every intent of making your life, physical and meta-physical better in every way. For comparison SHUNIA is reminiscent of chant and mixed genre albums from Snatam Kaur, White Sun, or Sukha. Shunia combines the best of many sacred worlds in creating an album of ebullient bliss. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews