

# Maya & Sage

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On their debut album, Spirit of Love, Maya & Sage have created original chants and spirit songs that cross the boundaries of chant, world, pop, folk, new age, and dance, while covering a broad spectrum of sound from soft and devotional to up-tempo "heart-rocking" tunes. Each song is a celebration of universal love, inviting a variety of deep feelings and connections.

"Unlike traditional chant recordings," explains Sage, "we decided to mix various types of chant with world-beat pop songs because we like albums that ebb and flow with different musical styles, tempos, and rhythms."



This CD of "spiritual love songs" is available at stores and online at sites including [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and their own [www.mayasage.com](http://www.mayasage.com). Spirit of Love features enlightening lyrics, exotic instrumentation, rich layers of sonic texture, spicy rhythms, and soul-awakening vocals in both English and Sanskrit (a five-thousand-year-old language).

"The Sanskrit words are the same ancient mantras and chants that have been used for thousands of years," says Maya, "to help people reach a more spiritual space. Chanting is a valuable tool that helps us focus on being more alive in the moment. Sage and I are part of a new group of chanters who are trying to create interesting modern melodies, arrangements, and rhythms that are more accessible to today's audiences."

Maya & Sage consider themselves "Spirit Singers." "It has various connotations," Sage states. "With our music we are praising the spirit that is within every living thing. It also celebrates the Greater Spirit. It's energy, an excitement and passion for living, deep calming contentment, intense celebration, and an appreciation for life and love."

Both Maya and Sage integrate various philosophies and spiritual paths in their lives. Each has practiced meditation for many years; they study Zen-style and new-thought teachings as well as enjoy practicing Tantra. Their respect for Hinduism led them to choose a painting for the album cover depicting Radha and Krishna (a symbol of love). The album begins with a gentle, traditional-sounding chant, "Calling Sita Ram," a prayer for uniting the divine feminine (Sita) with the divine masculine (Ram) to create love and harmony within each of us. This intro leads directly into "Jai Sita Ram," a modern trance-dance-chant with a strongly propulsive beat. The album also contains the soft chant "Lakshmi Ma" (the universal mother in the Hindu tradition) and closes with "Jai Sita Ram (Reprise)."

While the chants purposely repeat phrases to create their desired effect, the recording also contains songs in more of the folk and world-pop genres featuring a fuller lyrical content -- "Heaven's Rain" (a love song), "My Breath" (breathing as a cornerstone of both life and transformative meditation), and "Utopia" ("I discovered it is inside all of us," says Maya).

But some of the highlights of the album are the compositions that combine pop-rock elements with the chanting phrase repetition -- the ten-minute "Spirit of Love" (sung in both English and Sanskrit), "Wild Companions" (with lyrics adapted from Persia's 14th-century mystic poet Hafiz), and the seven-minute-plus party-tune "Celebration."

Maya wrote the words and melodies, and sings lead vocals. Both she and Sage play acoustic guitar and keyboards. Sage adds vocal harmonies, and contributes electric guitar, Celtic harp, harmonica, didgeridoo, Native American flute, and a wide variety of percussion instruments. Special guests include vocalist Sylvia Nakkach (sound healer, innovative music teacher and founder of the Vox Mundi Project), tabla player and percussionist Geoffrey Gordon (Jai Uttal, Robbie Robertson, Rita Coolidge and Walela), bassist Craig Owens (Lacy J. Dalton, Snail) and saxophonist Gary Regina (Worlds Collide, Solcircle, Melange).

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It is appropriate that Maya & Sage celebrate the spirit of love on their first recording as a duo because theirs is a love story. A few hours after meeting they were singing harmony on each other's songs. The next night they attended a Jai Uttal concert which led to their deeper exploration of chanting with each other. After a few months they were performing concerts together and beginning to record Spirit of Love. A year later they married.

Maya's career has included teaching music to thousands of school children (including two years on New Mexico Indian reservations), serving as a "life coach" to individuals and many business executives (she has a Doctorate degree in Communication), and authoring the book *Rethinking Classroom Management* (written with Patricia Belvel). Maya has sung for audiences all over the United States as well as numerous far-flung locations around the world including South America, Budapest, Germany, Thailand, and Bali. Highlights include performing at the San Francisco Whole Life Expo, the Denver Coaching Expo, several Goddess Festivals in California's Monterey Bay area, the Alaska Bald Eagle Music Festival, and the Center for Conscious Living's 9/11 Anniversary event. In addition, she has had singing roles in plays such as "The Ramayana" with the Hanuman Foundation and "The Hero's Journey" at the Buckminster Fuller Amphitheater in Indonesia.

Maya grew up in Rochester, Michigan, began singing in churches and schools at a young age, took piano lessons from age seven, and at thirteen she got an acoustic guitar and started composing songs influenced by Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Carole King and Jackson Browne. At Michigan State University she studied music composition (with a voice major and a piano minor) and graduated with a Bachelors degree in Fine Arts. Maya moved to California, became a songstress in Calaveras County, learned to chant in Santa Cruz County at the Mount Madonna Creative Arts Center under guru Baba Hari Das, and sang a cappella for two years in Boulder, Colorado in the Ecstatic Choir led by Shanti Devi. In addition, Maya released a solo album of original material, Comin' Home.

Sage was raised on a ranch near Barstow in Southern California and, as a youngster, took piano lessons and then played the trumpet in school bands for five years. He began learning to play acoustic guitar at age 12, switched to electric guitar, and in high school played in a rock band that became the top group in town for three years and won first place over 40 bands in the San Bernardino County Battle of the Bands. His interest in meditation led him to the Ananda Village, a spiritual-and-meditation-oriented back-to-the-land yoga community near Nevada City in Northern California, where he learned to chant and play the harmonium.

Sage began writing songs, first on acoustic guitar and later on acoustic piano. Some of the instrumental compositions, influenced by new age pianist George Winston, Sage recorded and self-distributed. After studying and playing hand-drums for many years, he joined the spiritual dance band Namasté which played large monthly auditorium concerts. After moving to Santa Cruz, California, he co-founded The Healing Music Organization; led weekly groups through sound healing, meditation and chanting; performed at numerous events, such as the International Sound Symposium in San Jose and the Global New Thought Churches Conference in Palm Springs; and recorded the nationally-released album Entering Devachan with singer Amrita Cottrell.

"Our dream is to create music that joyfully celebrates life and to share this heart-music with others," states Maya. "This is radiant awakening music for remembering who we truly are. We want the music to be sonic inspiration to embrace life with passion and purpose, to be all we can be, and to live a kind and loving life connected to our higher wisdom."

