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MUSIC

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Singing songs of praise in memory of mother

Babeena Sharma is a talented and highly trained North Indian vocalist who started performing on stage with her parents when she was only four years old. She studied with acclaimed teachers, Guru Morone of Nagpur and Shri Bhoumik of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and later graduated from Prayag University of Indian Classical Music. Although she has been extolled by music gurus for years, she has never been interested in pursuing a professional career in music. It was only when her mother, the famous vocalist Behroze Chatterjee, passed away in July, 2003, that Babeena finally stepped out into the limelight. Even then, it was only to honor her mother's memory with a musical tribute. The result of this effort was her elegant debut CD, Mukti (\$14.95).

The songs that Babeena has chosen to perform on Mukti consist of exquisite North Indian classical melodies rendered with Western harmonies and orchestration. Although this combination of East and West gives the CD a modern flavor, the songs themselves were all composed by traditional religious poets like Kabirdas, Brahmananda and Guru Nanak. Babeena's silky smooth, velvet voice brings in a timeless sense of perfection and binds the entire package together seamlessly. She also makes the CD educational for Westerners by including English translations of the lyrics at the beginning of each song.

Babeena says she named her first CD Mukti--which means liberation from birth and death--because her hope for this particular music is that it might provide the listener a sense of freedom from the experiences of hectic daily life.

Babeena's mother, Behroze Chatterjee, will be remembered as a well-known ghazal

(light classical), geeta (classical) and bhajan singer who has performed all over the world including in the US and Canada. She also performed in a number of Hindi films.

Credit for the exceptional quality of the arranging, recording and mixing on the CD goes to Babeena's brother, Anupam Chatterjee, a talented musician in his own right. Although Anupam is known today primarily for his work with keyboard instruments and synthesizers, he began studying tabla at the age of two and continued that training with the great Ustad Allah Rakha when he turned eleven. Today he performs with leading Indian Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas and provides keyboard sequencing and track arrangement for music directors such as Vishaal Bharadwaj and Sandesh Shandelya. He joins Babeena in paying tribute to their mother.

Although Babeena was raised in India, she now resides in Washington, Pennsylvania, with her husband and their two children. For the past ten years she has contentedly taught voice lessons and performed at leisure for friends and at local temples. Mukti could change all that. For more information contact <http://www.muktispirit.com>