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CHANTS IN PRAISE OF KRISHNA: Dwarkadish Temple, Mathura
Live recording, 70 minutes. US\$16.98. JVC World Sounds,
Victor Entertainment, Inc., 26-18 Jingumae 4-Chome,
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan. Phone: 03-3746-5697, fax:
5741. In US only call toll-free: 1-800-JVC-1386.

JVC is providing an invaluable service to NRIs and all Hindus outside India. Their disc of Devaramsat Meenakshi Temple [Hinduism Today, June, 1995] delighted the Saivasof the South. This disc does the same for the Vaishnavasof the North. It is a one-of-a-kind field recording at the Dwarkadish Temple in Mathura, the birthplace of Krishna. Five live tracks share this ancient temple's daily worship rites: Prayer at the Yard of the Temple; Morning Prayer for Krishna's Awakening; Prayer of Praise to the Figure of Krishna; Songs of the Holi Festival;and Ancient Eulogy to Krishna.

FESTIVAL MUSIC OF KERALA

Traditional nagaswaram troupe, 70 minutes. US\$16.98. JVC World Sounds, Victor Entertainment, Inc., 26-18 Jingumae 4-Chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan. Phone: 03-3746-5697, fax: 5741. In US only call toll-free: 1-800-JVC-1386.

Hold your own Hindu festival!--with the most authentic CD of temple nagaswaramavailable, perhaps the only one of its kind. There are many studio recordings of nagaswaram--that unmistakeable double-reed horn of South India--but, good as they are, they still sound "canned." Not this one. Haven't you

wished that someone would record the incredible temple musicians of the South, those that perform as part of the daily regimen, whom you consider yourself lucky to have heard during darshan? That is what JVC has done. All the traditional festival songs are here, performed with delightful poise by mature musicians who demonstrate a subtlety rarely associated with this powerful and challenging instrument. Minor flaws are: though many ragas are presented, they all appear as one track and the ragas, recording site and musicians are not identified. [JVC's liner notes are not always accurate about India and Hinduism and should be read with discretion.]

PREM ARPAN: Devotional Bhajans.

Premanand Trikannad: vocal; Shyam Kane: tabla; Sheela Trikannad: manjira; Deepak Trikannad: tambura. 60 minutes. US\$15.00. *All proceeds will be donated to Anandashram, India. Satsang Foundation, P.O. Box 261243, San Diego, California, 92196-1243, USA. Phone: 619-566-6027.

"My humble obeisance at the feet of my holy masters, the most revered Papa Ramdas and Mataji Krishnabai, to whom this garland of devotional songs is dedicated with love. The only motivation behind making this CD is to raise whatever possible funds for those wonderful children of Ramnagar who are cared for by Anandashram, abode of bliss, founded by Papa Ramdas and Mataji Krishnabai." So Premanand writes in the liner notes. And his devotion is just as clear and pure in the singing on this disc. Though he claims, "What do I know of the science of music? I merely know to worship Him," Premanand's performance is excellent, inspired and, more to the point, inspiring. Those who love to sing to Ram (in Hindi) will find a treasure-trove of devotion here--with the most loved Ram bhajans, prayers and the precious chance to assist India's orphans.

LA FLUTE DE PANDIT HARI PRASAD CHAURASIA:

Bamboo flute: Hari Prasad Chaurasia, tabla: Zakir Hussain 57 minutes, call for price. Sonodisc, France. May be difficult to find. Check local stores, or Vista India, Inc., 1628 Oak Tree Road, Edison, New Jersey, 08820, USA. Phone: 908-494-9155, Fax: 908-549-9765.

This is the best Chaurasia there is. We never tire of it. It is ever-new, ever-soothing, ever-moving and sublime.

Unfortunately, however, it is not widely distributed. Even Chaurasia's greatest fans may not know of this disc, but they, too, will be entranced by it. The ragais Yaman, an extensible ragawhich allows a tremendous scope for improvisation. This is what finally renders it so difficult to perform. But here, in the hands of a master, it becomes the most alluring. The listener feels that Panditji has become the raga--so immersed in the music that the raga expresses itself through him. You, too, will lose yourself as these pure spiritual sounds arrest your awareness. The concluding Dhunfrom Uttar Pradesh, performed entirely on the transverse piccolo flute, is like a joyous, refreshing Himalayan breeze. No music library is complete without this disc. If you can find it, buy it.

VEENA: GEETHA BENNETT

Srimushnam Rajarao; mridangam. 60 minutes. US\$8.00. (cassette) Sangita Asian Musical Society, 620 North Enid Avenue, Covina, California 91722-3516. Phone: 818-967-5868; fax: 818-967-7703.

Mrs. Geetha Bennett, daughter and disciple of the late renowned musician and musicologist Dr. S. Ramanathan, is a natural-born virtuoso. Anyone who loves vina, or who has not yet heard vina, should have this tape. Geetha has a unique, captivating and refreshing style which delights and dazzles the listener. She shows an ingenuity which is too often lacking in carnatic music. Her technical ability and touching musicality allow her to play in a calm and graceful, yet confident way.

Every track on this tape is a joy. Raguvamsa Sudhahas been played by all the great masters, but Geetha's performance here tops them, with verve and invention never heard before--it's our favorite! Suki Evvaro, Eppovaruvaro and a charming Tamil song, Chinnanchiru Kiliye, make this a landmark recording. Great work, Geetha!