

# Rahasya offers sacred sounds for the spirit on stage

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Published Friday, February 11, 2011

In Christianity, music is shared in the form of hymns sung by a congregation or choir and, in more recent years, through praise and worship bands. The tradition focuses on the lyrics and words for their meaning, to bring greater understanding to the lessons taught in the sermon.

## **Rahasya CD release party**

When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday

Where: Sangha Yoga Studio in the Healing Arts Centre, 834 Prince Ave.

Cost: \$7-\$10 suggested donation, all ages

Call: (706) 613-0120

Online: [www.rahasya.org](http://www.rahasya.org)

Details: Kirtan begins at 7:30 and ends with refreshments and a CD preview.

## **Vinyasa Yoga class to live music by Rahasya**

When: Noon-2 p.m. Sunday

Where: Sangha Yoga Studio in the Healing Arts Centre, 834 Prince Ave.

Cost: \$15

Details: This class is challenging, uplifting, fun and best suited for experienced Vinyasa yoga practitioners.

located in the Healing Arts Centre in Athens. It's an unusual CD release show in that the "performance" is kirtan, with the audience participating in the music as well. But it's not unusual for the duo, who've been leading kirtans in Athens and around the country for several years.

A two-month tour last summer took them out West, primarily to yoga studios and Ashrams, Surdas said, which tend to have a larger interest in kirtan.

Live, the duo (who often are joined by other musicians including Gershon, James Keane and Mason Lucas) usually uses traditional instruments - a harmonium, which is something like a small organ or keyboard, and dholak, a drum typically found in Northern India.

On the CD, though, the instruments are Western - drums, bass, guitar, keyboards. The result is a melodic and beautiful crossover - most likely to appeal to people steeped in trance and ambient electronica.

Repeated vocal phrases swirl through in a polished production of instrumental textures. It creates the mysterious effect of being both energizing and calming - an ideal mental state for meditation.

Eastern religions have a tradition in music as well, but the focus is slightly different.

Single Sanskrit words or phrases are chanted in a call-and-response repetition that, putting it simply, creates a calming vibration in the body, bringing stillness to the thoughts. Through this stillness ultimately emerges a sense of peace and connection with the divine spirit within us.

It's this Eastern practice, known as kirtan, that drew local musicians and yoga teachers Surdas and Vajra.

Surdas, a percussionist who's played in a number of Athens bands over the years, most recently with Moyuba, joined with vocalist/instrumentalist Vajra to create a kirtan practice based in Hindu, Buddhist and Sufi traditions. In the mix, they merged their own backgrounds in Western secular music.

"It was more a creative exploration of the instruments we've played for most of our careers, and merging that with this sacred traditional music," Surdas said.

Called Rahasya, the duo celebrate the release of their first CD on Saturday at Sangha, the yoga studio

And it taps into what rahasya means. The translation is "deep mystery," and, Surdas said, "refers to the mystery of the heart space, beyond the rational mind.

"Chanting and singing is a way to vibrate our bodies with sound and has a physiological effect in that it calms the mind and allows us to sink more deeply into that heart space."

The two will lead a yoga class Sunday at Sangha with live music, trading off with guest musician Gershon throughout the class.

For now, it's a rare opportunity to experience the music live, as they'll be taking off on a tour of the Southeast this spring. But, Surdas said, they are setting an intent to do monthly kirtans soon.

Those interested should contact them at this weekend's events or through the band's website, [www.rahasya.org](http://www.rahasya.org).

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Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Friday, February 11, 2011 | [report an error](#)

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