

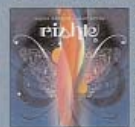
Najma Akhtar & Gary Lucas
Rishte

World Village 450008

Full Price (56 mins)

★★★★

Blues-rock meets Indian modes



Although I didn't realise it at the time, the first world music album I ever bought was a record by John Mayer and Joe Harriott's Indo-Jazz Fusions more than 40 years ago. In the years since, John McLaughlin and others have continued to fuse jazz and Indian music in highly imaginative fashion, but there have been far fewer attempts to explore the common link between Indian music and that other great musical product of black America, the blues. Step forward the British-Asian singer Najma Akhtar and the American guitarist, Gary Lucas, formerly of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band. On his album *The Edge Of Heaven*, Lucas reinterpreted classic Chinese pop tunes with a bluesy edge and Akhtar has famously worked with Page and Plant, so both are used to pushing the boundaries of their default styles – which may begin to explain why their collaboration here works brilliantly. The concept is at its most obvious on Skip James' 'Special Rider Blues', a magical journey from Memphis to Mumbai and back again.

Yet in many ways the rest of the material, jointly composed by Akhtar and Lucas, is even more interesting. Their guitar-vocal duets are accompanied only by *tabla* and, occasionally, violin. Some of it has a very 1960s hippy, free-festival feel: 'Naya Dhin' even reminded me improbably of early acoustic Tyrannosaurus Rex. As for Akhtar, her voice is a heaven-sent gift. If she had made this album with that other noted blues aficionado, Robert Plant, it would surely sell a million and win a Grammy.

**TOP
 OF THE
 WORLD
 ALBUM**



Nigel Williamson

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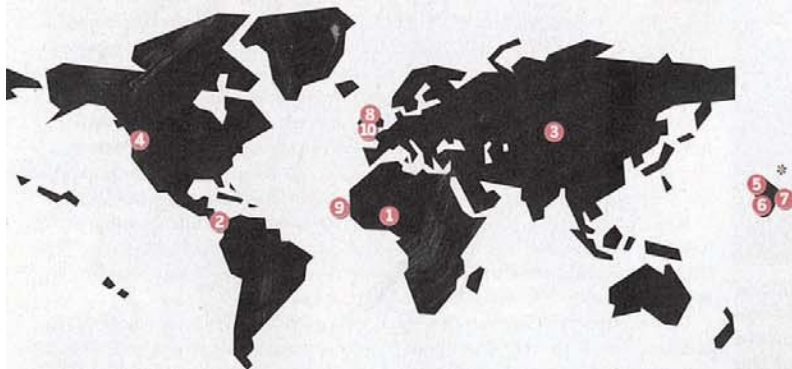
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SOONER LINES

1999 10 2009

Playing for Change

SONGLINES

TOP
OF THE
WORLDThe editor's selection
of the top ten albums
reviewed in this issue

What's on your free CD

**1 Tony Allen 'Secret Agent'** (5:20)From the album *Secret Agent* on World Circuit

The Afro-beat co-founder and drummer delivers a groove-filled thriller of an

album. See p58

**6 Najma Akhtar & Gary Lucas 'Naya Dhin'** (3:28)From the album *Rishte* on World Village

Gary Lucas' blues-rock guitar fuses seamlessly with the joyous singing of British

Asian talent Najma Akhtar. See p78

panama!2

2 Los Silvertones 'Tamborito Swing'

(3:40)

From the album *Panama! 2* on Soundway**7 Kronos Quartet 'Ya Habibi Ta'ala'** (2:58)From the album *Floodplain* on

Nonesuch

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TOP
OF THE
WORLDCD
6110 tracks from this issue's 10 best new albums, plus 5 bonus playlist tracks
Exclusively with the July 2009 issue of *Songlines***1 Tony Allen 'Secret Agent'** (5:20)
From the album *Secret Agent* on World Circuit
(P) & © 2009 World Circuit Ltd. Courtesy of World Circuit**2 Los Silvertones 'Tamborito Swing'** (3:40)
From the album *Panama! 2* on Soundway
(P) & © 2009 Soundway Records Ltd. Courtesy of Soundway**3 Mamer 'Iligai'** (3:12)
From the album *Eagle* on Real World
(P) & © 2009 Real World Recordings Ltd. Courtesy of Real World**4 Rachel Harrington 'Old Time Religion/Working on a Building'** (3:19)
From the album *City of Refuge* on SkinnyDennis Records
(P) & © 2008 Rachel Harrington/SME/SkinnyDennis Records. Courtesy of SkinnyDennis Records**5 Oi Va Voi 'S'brent'** (3:59)
From the album *Travelling the Face of the Globe* on Oi Va Voi
(P) & © 2009 Oi Va Voi. Courtesy of Oi Va Voi**6 Najma Akhtar & Gary Lucas 'Naya Dhin'** (3:28)
From the album *Rishte* on World Village
(P) & © 2009 Najma Akhtar/PBS & Gary Lucas Music BMI, under exclusive licence to World Village. Courtesy of World Village**7 Kronos Quartet 'Ya Habibi Ta'ala'** (2:58)
From the album *Floodplain* on Nonesuch
(P) & © 2009 WEA International Inc. Courtesy of Nonesuch**8 Maukín: Causley 'Drummer Boy for Waterloo'** (3:40)
From the album *The Awkward Recruit* on Navigator Records
(P) & © 2009 Navigator Records. Courtesy of Navigator**9 Lura 'Marinhêro'** (3:58)
From the album *Eclipse* on Lusafrika
(P) & © 2009 Lusafrika. Courtesy of Lusafrika**10 Luke Plumb with James Mackintosh 'Drunken Landlady/Love at the Endings'** (4:18)
From the album *A Splendid Notion* on Shoogleg Records
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PLUS Karl Hyde's playlist

11 Juana Molina 'Un Día' (5:39)
From the album *Un Día* on Domino
(P) & © 2008 Domino Recording Co Ltd. Courtesy of Domino**12 Dona Dumitru Siminică/Osoreia Osbaro'** (3:21)
From the album *Sounds from a Bygone Age Vol 3* on Asphalt Tango Records
(P) & © 2006 Asphalt Tango Records GmbH, Berlin. Courtesy of Asphalt Tango**13 Roscoe Holcomb 'Coal Creek'** (1:32)
From the album *An Untamed Sense of Control* on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
(P) & © 2003 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways**14 Rakotozafy 'O Zaza Ny Fandeha Diara'** (3:15)
From the album *Valiha Malaza/Famous Valiha* on Ace Records
(P) 1995 Productions Sunset-France/Re Records Ltd & © 1995 Ace Records Ltd. Courtesy of Ace Records**15 Taj Mahal & Toumani Diabaté 'Queen Bee'** (5:07)
From the album *Kudanján* on Rykodisc
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