



**Najma Akhtar
and Gary Lucas**
Rishte

World Village

★★★★★

Akhtar sings ghazals, Urdu love poems of unrequited love and spiritual devotion, in new settings: her 1986 album *Qareeb* floated over keyboards and saxophone. Lucas is credited for "Magical Guitarness" on Jeff Buckley's *Grace*, and on *Rishte*, he conjures up similar sorcery. His playing is western in sound but acquires South Asian sonorities with the tabla underneath. Akhtar's ghazals mingle with Skip James's "Special Rider Blues" and "Soul Taker", an English ghost ballad.