

## Jewel

Review of the CD “Jewel” by Dechen Shak-Dagsay, published by Universal Music GmbH and vandykmusic 2010.

When I listen to music, I don't just hear music. I hear, see, and feel the music. Dechen Shak-Dagsay is a Tibetan mantra singer. Mantras are repetitive prayers sung in various religions including Tibetan Buddhism. Dechen released her CD “Jewel” containing such Tibetan mantras in 2010. First of all, I must say that I had been awaiting this new project with high anticipation. I already knew that Jewel would become a project that not only is tremendously successful but one that touches my heart. In fact, Jewel is a priceless jewel. Let me take you on a musical and spiritual journey listening to this album. Herewith, I would like to share with you how I hear, feel and see Jewel. Ready?

### **3 precious jewels**

Starting off slowly, then excited with anticipation we hear the first words: Buddham, Saranam Gachhami.....” wondering what is to come. Having heard other albums so far one is certainly curious. In Buddhism three things are most important: The Buddha, The Dharma and the Sangha. The 3 precious jewels is a track that not only provides tribute to those, but also prepares the listener for a spiritual journey with Dechen: The strings set in, the drums form a crescendo..... So here we go:

### **Medicine Buddha**

The medicine Buddha reminds one of breathing in and out slowly. We take a deep breath of fresh air, full of health, taking it in and spreading healing, well being and contentment through every cell of the body. In and out some yogis recommend breathing deeply. With our feet on the ground, we stretch our bodies from earth up into the sky connecting our bodies with all the energies of the body, soul and mind. The background rhythm reminds me of the ever ongoing processes of human life and bodies. At the same time we are reminded of how connected we are in what is really important such as relaxation, healing and wellness. A little bird sits on a tree looking out. I call this mantra the song of life.

## **Praising Tara**

Tara is a Buddhist Goddess. This mantra pays tribute to her. Now Jewel is getting into a steady rhythm that makes one get up and appreciate the abilities our earthly bodies we have. One wants to jump up, spread your wings and dance in smooth and soft circles, like smooth waves of water, sound and light. One feels like a bee flying from one flower to another exploring our planet earth and discovering one amazing thing after another. Just go outside into nature and look around, look at the person next to you, look at the objects that surround you. Isn't life amazing, bountiful and simply incredible? Use your senses and explore, see, hear, feel and touch life! Praising Tara for me is like saying thank you. Thank you for that I have this amazing body and its senses through which we can discover so many incredible things every day.

## **100 syllable mantra**

The rhythm picks up and so do we. Everything spins around. We are here, we are there. I call it the rhythm of modern life. Nothing can be fast enough, we live like in a spiral, multitasking doing this and doing that, and yet we are spiritual beings coming from a different place and time. Life was not always as it is today. In earlier times life came down to the basics and the only thing that starts everything – love. As the drums set in, this prehistoric basic function of the human heart make one get up and dance and spread this basic but profound energy called love. It makes me want to get up and hug (almost) every one I encounter on my way.

## **Vaja Guru**

Vaja Guru is my personal favorite. The first time and other times thereafter I cried. There is not too much to say about this mantra. One has to experience it. The emotions speak for themselves. It cleanses my heart and soul of any negativity, uplifts and provides comfort and confidence to the listener. Vaja Guru makes us cry, but that is good because it cleanses. It cleanses

the emotional system. The strings and voices calm and uplift at the same time. They pick up beyond imagination. It is so beautiful that even I cannot describe it because the sounds here go beyond our humble human words. When I listen to it, it uplifts me so much that I feel like looking up into the blue sky and dream. I feel free like a bird. All of a sudden I just know that no matter what I am currently going through, it will be okay. This mantra has to be not just listened to, but experienced in its full bloom. It definitely has healing properties. It cleanses and uplifts the spirit. After listening to this mantra, no being is the same as it was before.

### **Heart Sutra**

With the Heart Sutra, new, new sounds, male sounds are introduced. It sounds like monks chanting. As Dechen joins the sutra her voice enters the song like the wind blowing softly over the monastery. Prayer flags blow in this gentle breeze. Over the mountain tops the sun brings in light and warmth on the skin. Whatever is in my heart, it becomes lighter. Whatever troubles I might have, this song speaks directly to my heart chakra. It warms and enlightens my heart and I realize that everything is impermanent and interconnected. Just as the wind blows through the prayer flags, touching one after another, life also goes by. Everything fades away and becomes one.

### **Tara**

Deliverance from fears and dangers – who does not dream of that. I find that a real deliberation takes time, courage and a complete change of mind and one's self. Tara can help and be the first step. Hypnosis, meditation and other forms of deep relaxation do their shares and help, but so does Tara. We here natural sounds, rains, birds, water drops and chanting. Light hearted, a girl is running, jumping full of curiosity and lightness through the woods. This mantra sounds like some warm, tropical paradise where there are only soft and enchanting sights and sounds, something light, like a white summer dress caressing the body, soul and mind. Once again we hear the soft wind, the sounds reunite and strengthen, and give reassurance that life indeed can be warm, light and full of wonderment. A warm and sunny spring day has finally risen upon us after a long, cold and

dark winter. The more we get into this new uplifting and positive mood, the happier we become, the more carefree and light. Where there is warmth, love and light, there is no need for fear, danger, no darkness. Let the sun into your heart, run, jump and enjoy life's spring-like days. The more you open your heart, the more warmth and sun can come in.

### **Amidaba**

Amidaba is a mantra about rebirth. Rebirth can be a controversial topic for some. This is the truth. Fact is that not everybody understands it or believes in it. Some are convinced about it, others are not. I personally do believe in it and do not make a secret about it. Heaven, Paradise, Pure land, call it whatever you want and believe in, the fact is that every one of us wants to be reborn there or go there once we leave this earthly planet we are on in our current lifetimes. I believe that we have been here before and we will come again. I also believe that previous lives can have an impact on our current one. Sometimes we remember something or feel very attracted to something, without really knowing why or having anything to do in this life time. For instance, I have always loved all kinds of drums. The sound of drums deliberates me, makes me happy somehow beyond comprehension. I have never had anything to do with drums in this lifetime except the fact that I wanted to play the drums so badly when I was a child. Perhaps I was a drummer in another lifetime? Perhaps I lived in Africa playing drums there in another lifetime? And now my deepest I remembers this? Who knows? In any case, after all trials and tribulations our lives sometimes come upon us with, the promise of some sort of Heaven, Paradise or Pure land certainly is appealing. So let's see.

### **Chenresi**

Sounds of flute and drums working on a deeper level. These could be the sounds of the subconscious mind from deep within trying to push out into the daylight of our souls. Like a plant, starting out with the seed deep into the ground, pushing upwards from dark, deep spaces the subconscious mind is the root of everything. This is our deep self within us that we often forget or even try to ignore. Our daily lives and tasks often let us work on a routine basis, day in day out the

same procedure. We get up, got to work, go home, go to bed, get up again. There must be more to life than that. The steady rhythm reminds us of recurring events and things that come and go for sure. The question is what is for sure actually? Everything we assume as regular and take for granted comes and goes. Some things we might do for a little time, some for a longer time, but the fact is that everything fades and changes eventually. Perhaps at the end of the day only the deep self remains. The question is does this not also change consistently?

### **The three Jewels**

After exploring the depths of our within we now exhale slowly and come to a conclusion. The slow sounds of the flute and singing bring us to an end of an amazing musical and spiritual journey. As the intro, we are left with the remaining rhythm of life and sounds that are so much more than just sounds. Our moods are uplifted, our hearts lightened, drums, flutes, strings and rhythmic singing let us exhale, awaken our senses, and lift our heads to go through life full of confidence, lightness, love and joy. We are ready to explore and enjoy life and all its wonders. It is time to open our eyes and ears and walk through the world with an open mind and heart. Birds come in sight that fly and keep flying. Sure they are not always fearless, but they keep flying. Therefore, keep going, keep believing, keep working on your goals to make your dreams come true, or just for a better tomorrow. Exhale, smile and keep wondering about life!

This review was written by Barbara Bullock by free writing. No sources used with the exception of the CD Jewel by Dechen Shak-Dagsay, published 2010 by Universal Music GmbH and vandykmusic as well as general knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism were used.