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CD REVIEWS

LUSH AND LOVELY COLLABORATION

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Shujaat Husain Khan and Katayoun Goudarzi

[Ruby](#) (Shujaat Husain Khan, 2015)

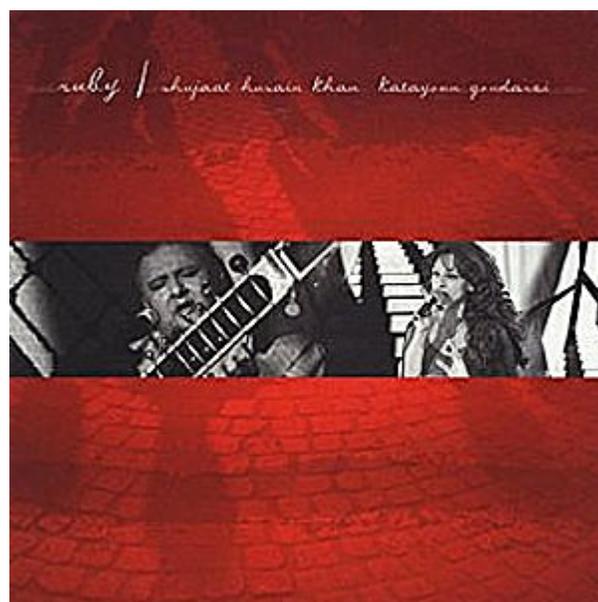
Brimming over with flute, tabla, sarangi, santoor, percussion and lavish sitar lines by the Grammy-nominated Shujaat Husain Khan and the sumptuous vocals of Iran's Katayoun Goudarzi, *Ruby* is a triumph in this fifth collaboration and musical study incorporating the poetry of the Persian poet Rumi.

Wrapped in an elegant musical exchange of sitar and vocals, Mr. Khan and Ms. Goudarzi conjure up shimmering, stunning collaboration bound together by the 13th century poet, jurist, scholar, theologian and Sufi mystic.

"Rumi was a mystical genius, a great thinker, and a mad artist," says Ms. Goudarzi. "That last part is my focus. I've spent a lot of time reading and thinking about it."

She goes on to explain, "Classical poetry and music are inseparable in Iran. As a little girl I often performed poetry. I could say the words but I couldn't yet feel them in my soul, like the ghazals he wrote out of his great love for Shams-e Tabrizi."

Joined by flutist Ajay Prasanna, tabla player Abhiman Kaushal, sarangi player Ahsan Ali, santoor player Prabhat Mukherjee and percussion Amjad Khan, Mr. Khan and Ms. Goudarzi work their way through five, long, lushly worked tracks: "Adrift," "Clouded," "Not Taken," "Whirling Tree" and "Bound."



Shujaat Husain Khan and Katayoun Goudarzi - *Ruby*

Ms. Goudarzi explains, *“On this record I sing all the poems. And we used different instruments – as well as voice and sitar, there’s bansuri flute, tabla, a sarangi, santur, and percussion. They bring different colors to the music, something new. Because of that, Shujaat and I had to find a fresh way of writing, one where we relied less on improvisation.”*

This collaboration Ruby is proof of the mastery of both musicians and vocalist, but also accentuates that tenuous thread connecting the music and the vocals.

Mr. Khan says of Ms. Goudarzi, *“She’s special. She knows her craft, but she delivers the songs with such emotional attachment that everything seems easy and seamless. It’s like breathing, absolutely natural.”*

He goes on to note, *“This is a record from our souls. It’s not something overproduced. It just seemed to flow, like walking.”*

This is one of those lush and lovely collaborations that is a must have recording with delicious tracks like “Adrift,” the serene mood of “Clouded” and the shimmering colors of “Bound.” Ruby is pure delight.

Mr. Khan says, *“When Katayoun and I get together, we speak a special language. We can feel each other’s emotions changing. It’s so beautiful and so unbelievable, creating something from that.”*

Purchase the digital version of [Ruby](#)



Author: TJ Nelson

TJ Nelson is a regular CD reviewer and editor at World Music Central. She is also a fiction writer. Check out her latest book, [Chasing Athena’s Shadow](#).

Set in Pineboro, North Carolina, [Chasing Athena’s Shadow](#) follows the adventures of Grace, an adult literacy teacher, as she seeks to solve a long forgotten family mystery. Her charmingly dysfunctional family is of little help in her quest. Along with her best friends, an attractive Mexican teacher and an amiable gay chef, Grace must find the one fading memory that holds the key to why Grace’s great-grandmother, Athena, shot her husband on the courthouse steps in 1931.

Traversing the line between the Old South and New South, Grace will have to dig into the past to uncover Athena’s true crime.

