

Album Review

Artist: Charu Suri

Album: Book of Ragas Vol. 2

Reviewer: Byron Smith, Brecon Indie Reviews

On her latest album, *Book of Ragas Vol. 2*, accomplished New Jersey-based pianist and composer Charu Suri has created an inspired work of masterful depth and beauty that soothes the heart and stirs the soul.

Drawing on her Indian heritage to courageously break her own musical trail, Charu combines passionate and playful piano virtuosity with a top line of expressive vocals, flawlessly performed in native tongue by entrancing Sufi singer Falsa, further accompanied at various moments by the tasteful and eloquent vibraphone of Jesse Gerbasi.

Perfectly spacious and captivating in equal measures, the album navigates a vast landscape of twists and turns with delightful surprises around every corner as the music wanders effortlessly through whimsical arpeggios, classical Indian feels, contemporary flavours, frolicsome morning raga romps and sweeping, soulful evocations of the spirit.

On the opening track, 'Raga Jaunpuri', the Sufi words (once translated) tell us that "*love needs no guidance from anyone*", while on track four, 'Aaj Rung Hai', Falsa's mesmerising voice invites his subject to "*dye me in the colour of the spring, beloved – what a glow, oh, what a glow*"... he could well be singing about Charu Suri, a gifted and highly original artist who makes music with love and dyes us in the colour of spring.

What a spellbinding colour it is!