

## media

## Soul Singer

On her new CD, devotional chant artist Sat Kartar Khalsa helps listeners get in the flow.

BY ALAN DI PERNA

A THRIVING SIKH COMMUNITY in Phoenix is marked by a beautiful golden-domed temple, still under construction. It's here—at the crossroads of the rapidly developing American West and the growing interest in Eastern practices—that the devotional chant artist and Kundalini Yoga instructor Sat Kartar Kaur Khalsa makes her home and her music.

Sat Kartar's newest album, *Flow* (Sat Kartar Music, [www.spiritvoyage.com](http://www.spiritvoyage.com), [www.satkartarmusic.com](http://www.satkartarmusic.com)), is her most gloriously realized work to date. Electronic keyboard textures (provided by producer Thomas Barquee) gracefully interweave with traditional Indian tabla pulses and meditative drones. Layer

upon layer of background vocals unfold like lotus petals. But the focus is Sat Kartar's crystalline voice—an instrument imbued with a welcoming, almost maternal warmth and an evocative style of phrasing reminiscent of Grace Slick, whose influence Sat Kartar absorbed, along with Joni Mitchell's, while growing up in Atlanta.

Facing a case of writer's block while a singer-songwriter in college, Sat Kartar accepted a friend's invitation to attend a yoga class. "It was Kundalini, the same yoga I'm doing now. I had a feeling it would relax and focus me enough to let songs come. Little did I know that I'd stumbled into a whole new world of sound."

That resonance with Kundalini Yoga led her to Yogi Bhajan (1929–2004), the great patriarch of American Sikhism, whom



SIKH PEACE: Sat Kartar Kaur Khalsa performs Kundalini chants as a form of sacred meditation.

## SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

LIGHT MY FIRE "One day we will die and merge with the earth,

with Mother Ganges. Why wait until death?" So asks one of India's holy men as he smears cremation ashes on his bare body. *Naked in Ashes* is an apt title for the 108-minute docu-



mentary that follows the daily life of Shiv Raj Giri and his band of disciples. Produced and directed by Paula Fouce, the film reveals the oddities of spiritual life: the disciple who shows his reverence by never lying down (he sleeps leaning against a support); the guru who walks barefoot in the snow; the holy man who tows a car with his genitals. A gritty sincerity comes through, too, as the guru reflects on a society that values shopping and entertainment over spirituality. For more info, go to [www.paradisefilmworks.com](http://www.paradisefilmworks.com).

THE POWER BROKER If you've never thought about your "fighting stance" on a yoga mat, you haven't tried Budokon. Cameron Shayne, the karate black belt who created the practice, calls on yoga—in the form of slow Sun Salutations—to develop power through stillness, martial arts to develop power through movement, and meditation to develop power through emptiness. For more info, see Shayne's Budokon DVD (Gaiam), [www.budokon.com](http://www.budokon.com).