



# Music without boundaries

Singer **Shivali's** songs that combine devotional tracks with contemporary tunes have found an audience world over

## Sanaya Chavda

When she started out 10 years ago, Shivali, who has always felt a connection with God, asked her best friend if he found the *Hanuman Chalisa* boring. When he said yes, she mixed it into a RnB version that soon became a hit among her friends. Now two albums later, the singer has created a name for herself for taking traditional *bhajans* and devotional songs and giving them a rock, pop or contemporary twist. "I wanted my first album *Bhajan Project* to be something different but with value — something with a message. *Urban Temple*, my second album, has the same concept but was created with much more confidence. It has nine tracks that include *Gujarati bhajans*, few Art of Living *bhajans* and other popular mantras," says the London-based singer.

While one cannot ignore the spiritual aspect to her music, Shivali says that her songs cater not just to an older audience. "India has a very Bollywood-centric audience. Spir-

ituality is a focus here but I don't see why it isn't so in the musical sphere as well. The youth is now more accepting of different genres," she says. On this album, *Vaishava Janato* is one of her favourite tracks because she deeply believes in its message of virtue, goodness, detachment, purity and the destruction of one's ego. "I take inspiration from artistes such as Anoushka Shankar and Lauryn Hill. Anoushka is always true to herself and doesn't shy away from doing things that aren't mainstream, while Lauryn's music is about devotion as well," she explains.

Her album has been very popular on the iTunes charts and while Shivali says she doesn't focus on the digital space, everything is moving that way. "It's important to still continue making CDs for all the *masis* who aren't internet savvy. My music goes beyond boundaries of countries, religion and caste. Anyone can identify with it and in fact I've got lots of fan mail from France and Germany too," she adds.

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—Shivali, singer