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<p>Kings & Queens The Best of Panjabi Roots Music</p> <p>label: beatScience/Saregama</p> <p>distr: rough trade (D) hoanzl (A) RecRec (CH)</p> <p>release: September 2006 digital: 21/07/2006</p>	
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KINGS & QUEENS

THE BEST PANJABI ROOTS MUSIC

Panjabis the world over have seldom needed an excuse to sing, dance and make merry. Knowing how to party is knowing what it is to be a Panjabi and here we celebrate the fast, furious, romantic and proud world of Panjabi folk music through its Kings and Queens.

With its long history, the record company Saregama has an enviable collection of the absolute best of Panjabi music and from its heaving archives we present a veritable who's who of the artistes who have dominated the music scene. These include 'honey-lips' Asa Singh Mastana, the sensational singing sisters Surinder and Prakash Kaur, the bawdy husband-wife team of K. Deep and Jagmohan Kaur as well the traditionally conscious Kuldeep Manak and A. S. Kang. It also features Mohd. Rafi and Mahendra Kapoor, who as highly successful singers in the Bombay Film Industry, became proud ambassadors for Panjab.

An interesting facet of Panjabi folk music is its close relationship with Naqal or 'Folk Theatre' where, in order to spice up the play and keep people's attention, a liberal use of caustic humour was employed through Boliyaan or 'bawdy lyrics'. The listener will also hear the word 'gidha', which literally means 'clapping'. It's a reference to the dancing and clapping performed by two women after the recital of a boli, the bawdy lyric repeated during a gidha sequence. Friends of the dancers gather round in a circle and encourage the women to vigorously express themselves with abandon. This intriguing sequence will begin slowly but picks up pace to become a maelstrom of expressiveness; a whirlwind of movement, laughter and vitality.

The classic love legends of Panjab have provided the backdrop for many an artiste. Folk singers for generations have sung of the tragedies of Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal, Sassi Punnu and Mirza Sahiban. The full throated Kuldeep Manak forewarns the tragedy about to befall the lovers Mirza and Sahiban; his style is traditional, unchanged and unaltered for generations. Panjab's classic lovers had rebelled against conventional norms and made the ultimate sacrifice. The great 18th century poet Waris Shah re-penned the tale of Heer and Ranjha from various sources and understood the pain of the lovers, that existence was balanced on love itself:

"Be thankful to God
For making love the root of the world
First He himself loved
Then he made the prophets
His beloved ones."

The courage to convey innermost thoughts therefore appears to be a birthright for the Panjabian (Panjabi female) and Panjab's heroines have always had an assertive nature, which even through tragedy offered them victory.

Panjabi folk lyrics are also characterised by familial relations. The concept of the extended family and co-habitation naturally gives rise to situations that demand expression through song. A woman's marital home provides the setting for many of these situations; some perfectly innocent and platonic and others which feed upon the audiences greed for lusty lyrics. The artistes Chamkila & Amarjyot, Mohd Siddique & Ranjit Kaur, Didar Sandhu and Narinder Biba all rise to the occasion, and a more candid form of trading insults is taken to a new level and explored by K. Deep & Jagmohan Kaur.

The Panjabi's penchant for romance is expressed in diverse forms through the likes of Asa Singh Mastana and A.S.Kang, whereas sentimentality, another Panjabi characteristic is featured via Lalchand Yamla Jat , Gurdaas Mann and Jagjit Singh.

This is an album that takes you on a roller coaster ride of emotions through the voices of Panjab's Kings and Queens. Long may they reign.