



Singing Emptiness: Kumar Gandharva Performs the Poetry of Kabir (Enactments)

By Linda Hess

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Here, two men, 5 centuries apart, make contact with each other through poetry, music, and performance. Kumar Gandharva, the great 20th Century Hindustani classical vocalist, sings Kabir, the great 15th Century poet. Kabir composed poetry that evoked a space called nirgun or shunya – something without qualities or boundaries, empty - which challenged listeners to know it and to know themselves. Kumar Gandharva, drawn to Kabir and other poets of the nirgun experience, seeks the voice that can actually sing emptiness. *Singing Emptiness* includes an explanatory introduction, bilingual texts of 30 songs, and a CD with selected songs by Kumar Gandharva.

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About the Author

Linda Hess teaches in the Dept. of Religious Studies at Stanford University and is co-director of Stanford's Center for South Asia. Her previous work on North Indian bhakti poetry and performance includes *The Bijak of Kabir* and numerous articles on Kabir, Tulsidas and Ramlila performance.

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