

Rita Sahai Releases New Album of Meera Bhajans

By a Staff Reporter

DAVIS, Calif. — Vocalist Rita Sahai gave a warm, skillful rendition of her favorite Meera bhajans, including a number of new pieces, at a concert at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at the University of California at Davis here Feb. 27.

Sahai, who teaches privately around the San Francisco Bay Area, also teaches Hindustani classical music at the school, and drew an audience of over 400 admirers from across the artistic spectrum, the majority non-Indian.

The well-tuned acoustics of the Mondavi Center were the ideal backdrop for Rita's finely toned and clear voice, accompanied by Swapan Chaudhuri on tabla and Ramesh Misra on sarangi. She began the concert with Raga Jog, an evening raga of splendor and majesty which complemented the richness of Sahai's voice, moving from bara khayal in ektal, chhota khayal in teental and tarana in teental in a fast tempo.

Following this 45-minute piece, Sahai performed a chhota khayal in Raga Kaushi Kanara in a medium-tempoed Jhaptal; and a thumri in Raga Desh which also showcased the skill of harmonium artist Kanwaljit Kalsi.

After the performances had concluded, Chaudhuri introduced Sahai's new album, praising the artist's dedication and recalling favorite moments he shared with her while recording the CD.

The evening closed with two



Rita Sahai lends her silvery tones to a new album of Mira bhajans. She launched the album at a concert in Davis, Calif., Feb. 27.

Meera bhajans composed by Sahai for her new album, *Meera*. "Rita's creative genius was of course obvious in all the pieces, but in this popular bhajan her creativity took on a golden sparkling quality," said one listener. "If we had been in India, I most certainly would have honored her with a hundred garlands!"

— Swami Mangalananda of Badarikashrama contributed to this report.