

Beyond the Beyond

Iconic Rock Star Tina Turner,
Regula Curti, and Dechen Shak-Dagsay
Find Harmony and Oneness
through Music and Prayer

Kent Rautenstrauss

What's Tina Turner got to do with it?

From outward appearances, she had the life of her dreams: worldwide stardom, including nearly 200 million copies of records sold; memorable movie roles; material success beyond imagination; and a royal title, *Queen of Rock 'n' Roll*. But for Tina Turner, née Anna Mae Bullock, there were also years of horrific physical abuse from her husband and musical partner Ike Turner graphically documented in a riveting autobiography and movie.

In the worst of times, Tina, a deeply spiritual woman who was raised Baptist, sought solace in reciting “The Lord’s Prayer” and, later, an ancient and mystical Buddhist chant to connect to a higher power beyond her human understanding. She began chanting “Nam Myoho Renge Kyo” over and over. “I found something changed inside of me, the load of the pressure of my life started to lift. I started to become happy, and then, slowly, the thoughts came to me of what to do to change my life.”

The power of prayer—Tina Turner believes in it with all her heart, so much so that in 2009, she joined creative forces with two renowned musicians based in Switzerland, one of Christian background and the other a Tibetan Buddhist, to go beyond religion, beyond theology, to go “beyond the beyond,” as Sufi Poet Rumi wrote, to meet together in a field of pure potentiality. The result is a remarkable music CD entitled *Beyond: Buddhist and Christian Prayers*.

Using Music and Prayer to Go Beyond

“I believe that music is the most universal language that we have on this planet, where people can go beyond race, culture, religion—even beyond themselves,” said Regula Curti, Project Leader and

the Christian voice on the *Beyond* CD. “By having a practice like singing or singing prayers to cleanse your mind from negative thinking and negative emotion, we can go beyond all existence.” Dechen Shak-Dagsay, a Tibetan Buddhist Mantra singer, who shares her vocal talent and prayers on the CD, added, “From a Buddhist perspective, it is considered very essential to positively influence our mind stream. Depending on the state of our mind, we do positive or negative actions through the three doors of body, speech, and mind. If a person is happy and at peace, that person’s actions will also be positive. This is why prayers and mantras are so important. They bring the stream back into a positive flow.”

The *Beyond* CD is an ecumenical spiritual message, weaving Christian and Buddhist prayers and chants sung by these two women and also includes chanting and a spiritual message by Tina Turner. “With the *Beyond* project, I’m glad to add my personal chants as an offering to the world to share a message of Oneness through music and prayer that goes beyond religious differences and helps bring humanity together,” Turner said.

The CD features fifteen evocative and interwoven tracks that are musically stunning and

also deepen the listener spiritually by “vibrating the heart,” to quote Curti. *Beyond* also contains a thirty-six-page collector’s booklet with compelling photography, text, and layout. The production values throughout are of the highest caliber. Santa Fe, New Mexico-based New Earth Records, dedicated to sharing the “healing power of music from the heart,” is the distributor. Since its 2009 release in Switzerland, Austria, and Germany, over 100,000 copies have sold, garnering platinum status, with 100 percent of artist’s proceeds supporting three organizations with a focus on the welfare of children. The *Beyond* CD made its United States debut in September 2010.

Everything about the creation of this artistic work is intentional. “For me, it is all about mindful-

ness,” said Curti. “If you do everything mindfully with lots of care, and you put your whole heart and love into it, it ends up being something beautiful.” Added Shak-Dagsay, “There is so much love and compassion going out with every single tone; we are convinced this gets carried over to the listener.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is one of the *Beyond* listeners. “Bringing together corresponding pieces from Christian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, as has been done here, will allow listeners to share in these prayers, stirring thoughts of deeper respect and peace in their lives,” he wrote in a foreword to the project.

How Three Women Met...Beyond

The remarkable story of how



Dechen Shak-Dagsay, Regula Curti, and Tina Turner

Tina Turner, Dechen Shak-Dagsay, and Regula Curti came to collaborate on this CD is comprised of divinely ordained experiences. “We three women ended up supported by an energy we produced daily in our rituals—an energy that carried us to that point where we actually met together,” said Curti, a music therapist, singer, Kundalini Yoga teacher, and founder and Managing Director of the Center of Therapy and Education Seeschau, The House of Resounding Emptiness in Zurich, Switzerland. At her center, she often plays Shak-Dagsay’s Buddhist mantra CDs during yoga and meditation classes. “Regula thought I was living somewhere up in the Himalayas because she was listening to my first album, *Deva Che*, where I sing pure Tibetan mantras,” said Shak-Dagsay, a prolific recording artist, and daughter

of the respected Tibetan Lama Dagsay Rinpoche.

As it turns out, both were coincidentally living across the lake from one another in Zurich. This was an amazing and joyous revelation. “We met on a very deep level immediately,” Curti explained. “I felt very, very close to her. We became good friends,” Shak-Dagsay agreed.

In March 2005, fueled by their newfound friendship and a shared belief in the power of prayer through music, they helped organize an interreligious ceremony between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Abbot Martin Werlen, head of the Benedictine Monastery in Einsiedeln, Switzerland. “The most moving point was when His Holiness pointed out that it was important not to change religions, but to stay within your own religious tradition, and yet be open and tolerant to other beliefs and to

respect one another,” commented Shak-Dagsay.

“Regula started to sing Christian prayers again like ‘Ave Maria’ and ‘Gloria’ which she hadn’t done for a long time. She had been mostly singing Buddhist and Hindu chants,” Shak-Dagsay said. Curti continued, “One day you ask yourself, ‘Where am I coming from? Where am I rooted?’ I carry a Christian name as Regula is the saint of Zurich. I went back to the monastery to deeply learn everything about Christian prayers.”

Shak-Dagsay also examined her Buddhist roots, and to her surprise discovered that the monks at the monastery also wanted to learn about the healing effect of Buddhist mantras. “Although they were in their own Christian tradition, we were able to connect within our hearts. This was a tremendous feeling. Regula and I felt that this kind of spirit needed to really be transported into the world—this feeling of openness, and yet being faithful to your own tradition.”

The two women began experimenting by interweaving Christian and Buddhist prayers, singing together at events, including a peace seminar between the Jewish and Palestinian people living in Switzerland. “We were asked by many people if we could make a CD together with Buddhist and

Christian prayers,” Curti said. “We realized that we really had something to tell people.”

Tina Turner Joins *Beyond*

In an extraordinary demonstration of fate, Curti met the legendary Tina Turner on a boat trip in Turkey. Turner, who also lives in Switzerland, yet another geographic serendipity for the *Beyond* project, had heard of Curti’s healing work. “This wonderful rock singer looked at me and said, ‘Regula, I would like to be taught by you.’ And I said, ‘What, Tina? You are the best singer on the planet! I can’t teach you anything!’ But she said, ‘I know you are a very spiritual person, and I would love to sing with you what you sing.’ So we sang together, and it was magic.”

“I didn’t know Tina personally,” Shak-Dagsay said. “To me, Tina is a world star, an icon. As we progressed with the CD, we felt, wow—this is going to be something special. At that time, however, we hadn’t planned or thought of Tina.”

“But in talking with our people,” Curti continued, “they suggested getting a star like Tina onboard.” Curti went to the mountains for a retreat to meditate on how to continue with “our precious production.

“I was reading a wonderful



Dagsay and Curti

book by Deepak Chopra about the spiritual teacher Jesus, and I was kind of daydreaming, meditating, and all of a sudden, I heard Tina's voice—but not singing. She was talking into a soundtrack. I woke up and said, 'That's it!' Tina is not singing. Tina is speaking!"

From her location in the Swiss Alps, Curti excitedly called Tina. "By coincidence or by destiny, *she* [Tina] answered the phone," and sensing Regula's emotions, invited her to come over that very evening to discuss the project. Curti drove as fast as she could down the mountain, arriving in Zurich approximately three hours later. She had to share only a few words about the *Beyond* project when the rock star smiled and said, "Regula, I have been waiting for this moment for a very long time. I will join the project because I was told that I would join some people for a spiritual project after my rock career as Tina Turner, and I think the moment is now. I will do it!"

Tina Turner Meets Deepak Chopra

The next step was to find the right words for Tina Turner to speak on the CD. Curti shared that she had been inspired to invite the rock star to join *Beyond* after reading Dr. Deepak Chopra's book and that he might

be willing to help with the text of the spiritual message. Turner was leaving for the United States the next day and agreed to contact the best-selling author, and less than two weeks later, the two met. Chopra shared many books with the rock star and assurances that the right words would come. "After some weeks, we found the exact wording—Tina's own words," Curti related.

In the studio, the engineers as well as Regula Curti and Dechen Shak-Dagsay were moved to tears by Tina Turner's spiritual message, inspired by Chopra's words and Rumi's poetry. Spoken with resounding depth, Tina shared from her heart about going beyond the beyond.

"Go beyond to feel the Oneness of the unity. Sing—singing takes you beyond, beyond, beyond, beyond. Take the journey inside of you; to become quiet to hear the beyond; to become open to invite the beyond; and be grateful to allow the beyond. Be in the present moment to live in the beyond."

In a reference to one of her biggest musical hits, Turner asks, "What does love have to do with it? Love grows when you trust. When you trust, love heals and renews. Love inspires and empowers us to do great things and makes us a better person to

love. Love makes us feel safe and brings us closer to God. When you go beyond, that's where you find true love. Keep singing—singing takes you beyond, beyond, beyond, beyond."

Where Is Beyond?

According to Curti, beyond is not a place, but an understanding. "It is that essence of deep understanding beyond religion, beyond any belief system; the essence or frequencies of love and compassion that you can experience when you are praying; when you are singing."

Said Shak-Dagsay, "We all wish to be happy, and no one wants to suffer. We can go beyond all that is separating us from each other. We can go beyond what is actually dividing us."

To go beyond, Tina Turner recommends praying and chanting.

"I've never stopped praying. I still pray. I will always pray." She will also chant. "When you say 'Nam Myoho Renge Kyo,' it will slowly remove all of the bad decisions you have ever made. The more you repeat the words, the cleaner you make your life. The more you chant it, the closer you get to your true nature. Your true nature is the right way of thinking and the right way of acting. The longer you go on this path, the more you avoid making wrong decisions....It is indeed mystical! And my life has proven this."

"Tina is really on a spiritual path," commented Curti. "She is meditating a lot. She invites people to join the *Beyond* project like she did by singing the prayers. During the terrible years with Ike Turner, when she was suffering and abused, the mantra singing really helped her to be



Tina Turner

safe, to trust, to love, and to find compassion for other beings. She was living in a time when rock was born, and she was giving her whole energy, her whole soul into being that rock voice. She now hopes she can be that spiritual voice, an almost shamanistic Tina.”

Spiritual Impact of *Beyond*

“My wish is to touch as many people with the message and to share the higher vibrations and frequencies in life. You can raise your frequencies by listening to water; by listening to wind; and also by listening to the CD *Beyond*. You get into a higher frequency,” shared Curti, who explained that a CD sequel is on the way as well as a host of *Beyond*-related projects, many involving children around the world.

“Having Tina on this project just opens such a wide scope to really reach out to normal, everyday people,” added Shak-Dagsay. “Our goal with *Beyond* was to reach the very simple, normal person on the street who might be struggling through life and is maybe just too busy to find peace and happiness within themselves. We give them an inspiration through Tina, who is such an idol for millions of people because of her music and amazing story, and her authen-

ticity as a person. This makes her a very credible person. People love her for that. With *Beyond*, the main message is that it is possible to have Christian and Buddhist prayers on one album and to create beautiful harmony between religions.”

Tina Turner thinks of *Beyond* as a beautiful and pure expression of the Spirit beyond the beyond, and compares it to a precious newborn infant. “The baby is out of the bath. It’s all dressed and ready to go out into the world....I’m very excited about that!” ■



To find out more about the Beyond Project, visit www.beyondsinging.com.



James Rouse

Anyone you know suffer from *chronic adultitis*? This is an insidious condition caused by being “too adult”—not playing enough, being too serious, and carrying way too much stress. If you recognize these symptoms and are open to healing this choice, then let’s co-create here and now more of who you really are: pure joy, infinite creativity, and divine vitality.

Movement, change, and growth are gifts by which you can thrive. Choosing to be light, readily reaching for your highest expression, and believing (like Einstein) that this is indeed a friendly Universe will enable you to groove a new path in your brain and in your life. The possibilities are infinite. Give your exercise plan a makeover with play. Repeal your daily treadmill sentence for true freedom-based freeze tag in the park with your greatest teachers of light—kids. Make a date to undo your adultitis—invite yourself to a dance between dinner and dishes, play catch, jump rope, or run after bubbles you just blew. Play, with movement, increases cranial fitness, decreases stress hormones, and makes you the best you ever!

Marinate or meditate? When getting caught up in chronic, high-level angst becomes the norm, we can expect our brains and bodies to age at an accelerated speed. Being stuck in the stress response and choosing to marinate in its harmful hormonal stew can cause shrinkage of the hippocampus, and this reduces the ability to regulate stress healthfully and can compromise long-term memory. If you are overly stressed, put yourself in a “time out” for a while. Use this time for meditation and prayer. This will support youthful brain circuitry as well as bring forth greater mindfulness, balance, and clarity. Make your way from prayer to play with gusto. Short bursts of vigorous movement help to offset the aging effects of stress on our cells.

Your prescription for healing: skip with reckless abandon, laugh with your belly, be open to being awed, exercise courageous curiosity, and live out loud with all your heart!

Dr. James Rouse is a naturopathic physician with extensive credentials in the wellness field, including post-doctorate work in acupuncture and Chinese medicine, transpersonal psychology, and certification as a yoga teacher.