

Om is where their heart is

Deva Premal and Miten have performed melodic mantras for the Dalai Lama three times

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THE names of New Age musicians Deva Premal and Miten may not strike a chord immediately, but they have famous fans all over the world.

On her recent farewell concert tour, the yoga-loving American singer Cher sang the duo's version of Hinduism's 8,000-year-old Gayatri mantra.

Tibet's Dalai Lama has had vocalist Premal and acoustic guitarist Miten perform for him thrice, especially their rendition of his favourite Sanskrit mantra Om Tare Tuttare which celebrates Tara, the goddess of compassion.

Even the late well-regarded psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross once told them: "Please promise me you will sing your songs at my funeral."

Sadly, they were in the middle of a concert in the United States when they got wind of Dr Kubler-Ross' death, but they had sung for her at her bedside a few months before she died.

Premal and Miten, whose names mean Divine Loving and Friend Of God in Sanskrit, flew in yesterday and will perform for the first time in Singapore at the Esplanade Recital Studio this weekend.

On the telephone with Life! during their stopover in Nuremberg, Germany, on Monday, Premal and Miten — who are a couple on and offstage — say they do not see themselves as stars because "music is a form of medicine and meditating to music is the ultimate elixir".

Miten, who is 57 and British, sets ancient Sanskrit mantras to his own feel-good melodies which Premal, who is 34 and German, then sings in her warm, silky timbre as their way of "bringing the calm of the ashram to the world".

Miten himself is a former rock 'n'

roller and was for many years the opening act for such 1970s rock stars as Fleetwood Mac, Lou Reed and Randy Newman. He says he went in and out of the Osho ashram in Pune, India, from the early 1980s to the early 1990s "to kick the habit of misery".

It was there that he met Premal in 1991. She was a 21-year-old masseuse learning reflexology and shiatsu and had never sung in public until she met Miten. Both soon discarded their birth names and assumed Sanskrit names, although they are still avowed free thinkers. They refused to reveal their birth names.

The duo, who make their own albums, have three releases — *The Essence*, *Love Is Space and Embrace* — of which 400,000 copies have been sold worldwide to date, which they say keep them in clover.

Their fourth album, *Dakshina* or *Offering*, will be out next April.

Miten says he is not offended that their albums are sometimes panned as spa muzak.

As he puts it: "Our songs are written so that Westerners who can't relate to Indian music can still relate to the ancient calming mantras."

▶ Deva Premal & Miten will chant mantras from 8pm at the Esplanade Recital Studio on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets at \$25 may be bought at the Esplanade box office or from Sistic outlets (tel: 6348-5555) or online at www.esplanade.com Check out their website at www.MitenDevaPremal.com



New Age artists Premal (above) and Miten, who have fans like Cher, don't see themselves as stars.

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