

Deva Premal
Embrace

By Mandala Magazine in Review

Deva Premal continues to melt the barrier between song and chant with this third CD. Through fresh musical compositions and her haunting voice, Premal's chants embody genuine love and tenderness. The offerings here include the deep "Om Tare Tuttare," a playful "Range De," and healing medicine Buddha chant "Teyata." Oh, lucky listener.

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By Music Design in Review

"The high chanteuse of chant, Deva Premal, is a pillar of originality in the grand garden of Indian music. You might say she's to Sanskrit Mantras what Enya is to Celtic music. Her smooth soulful voice, which resides in the lower octaves, haunts atmospheric, lightly rhythmic, ethereal soundscapes skillfully crafted by her partner Miten. Together they take listeners on a journey into the depths of the soul that doesn't forget to stop at the heart. The music's easy on the ears, spiritually provocative and contains enough mass appeal to make even the yoga-phobic stir. Throw in a duet with Jai Uttal (Om Ram Ramaya) and you have an album that will get anyone's chakras in an uproar.

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By Derk Richardson, Yoga Journal

On the follow up to their popular previous recordings THE ESSENCE and LOVE IS SPACE, Deva Premal and her longtime collaborator Miten successfully negotiate the challenging middle way between the sacred and the secular, between a traditional, "pure" approach to devotional chant and a technologically sophisticated production using pop instruments and modern studio techniques.

It is a path that entails the double risk of compromising the source material's integrity for the sake of "crossing over" and failing to enhance the mesmerizing repetitiousness of chant with music of complexity and depth. Both Jai Uttal (especially on his most recent CD, MONDO RAMA) and Kit Walker (notably in his collaboration with Tibetan singer Techung) have scored triumphs in this fragile realm, so it is no surprise that each asserts a formidable presence on EMBRACE, the former on dotar, harmonium, and performing a guest vocal, and the latter on keyboards and programming. Along with Miten on acoustic guitar, Zakir Hussain protegee Ty Burhoe on tabla, and Nepali native Manose on bansuri, plus an additional percussionist, a cellist, a pedal steel guitar and sitar-guitar

player, and background vocalists, they have created elegant atmospheric arrangements that ride on supple grooves and insinuating beats.

At the forefront is Premal's lovely voice. Something of a New Age renaissance woman (she has studied shiatsu, reflexology, craniosacral therapy, as well as massage), the German-born singer intones praises to Tara, the Goddess of Compassion; Shiva; Vishnu; Rama; and the Medicine Buddha. Because she only occasionally executes the microtonal slides and pitch bends of Hindustani vocals, her singing has a decidedly Western feel, and her timbres and phrasing are not that unlike those of such pop-folk singers as Shawn Colvin, Eva Cassidy, and Enya.

The ultimate effect is one of radiant cross-cultural harmony. One can take blissful refuge in the luxurious East-West mix and Premal's often multi-tracked vocals, or exercise the ear by attending to the instrumental intricacies and contemplating the spiritual implications of the gorgeously rendered mantras.

Miten and Deva Premal Songs for the Inner Lover

By Susan Dobra, Natural Health and Beauty Magazine

Miten and Deva Premal rose to international fame by singing the names of God. Their extraordinary collaboration has produced a number of CDs (Embrace, Satsang, The Essence) well-beloved among the yoga and meditation crowd. This newest CD, largely Miten's, is a heartfelt, sweet, serene collection of songs, most with Premal on background vocals. The autobiographical "Second Chance" is an honest reckoning of a wish fulfilled:

"Here comes your second chance/You'd better believe it/Open up and receive it."

Miten's wistful vocals and simple instrumentation bring the listener straight to the heart of his celebration of a life transformation. "Till I Was Loved By You" is a soulful, rhythm-and-bluesey love song, replete with spirited harmonies and the keyboard magic of Maneesh De Moor. These are songs for going inward and honoring love.

Miten and Deva Premal Songs for the Inner Lover

By Paul Blake, UK

"It has been six years since Miten last released a recording featuring his own songs and lead vocals. Six years in which he has played supporting partner to a trio of beautiful Deva Premal albums, performed for the Dalai Lama, and has seen his and Deva Premal's arrangement of the Gayatri Mantra covered by Cher. As he sings on one of the tracks on his new album, ***Songs for the Inner Lover***, he has "seen a lot of road."

"His albums with Deva Premal, his musical and life partner, are a tough act to follow but ***Songs for the Inner Lover*** emerges as a natural companion to ***The Essence***, ***Love is Space***, and ***Embrace***, sharing their lush soundscapes and emotional swoops. Yet ***Inner Lover*** is as singular a work as Miten has ever released and also his most intimate, full of a touching honesty and vulnerability.

"It starts sublimely with a cover of *So Much Magnificence*. The popular sing along is transformed here into an elegiac hymn to nature and Spirit, slowed down and rebuilt around the vocal interplay between Miten and Premal. The moment when the wash of synths and piano give way to Miten's vocal is an extraordinary one, the sort of magical moment that happens all the time when Miten and Premal play live but is difficult to capture in the studio.

"The two mantras on the disc, *Sat Patim* and *Ishq' Allah*, will be familiar to those who have attended the duo's voice celebrations. *Sat Patim* is a mantra for women to chant when looking for a life partner, and incorporates the mantra OM Shreem Shriyei Namaha, chanted by men to ask for more Shakti energy in their lives.

"*Ishq' Allah* is the ancient Sufi chant [God is Love, The Lover, and The Beloved], transformed by Maneesh de Moor's arrangement into a silky contemporary testament to love and faith. Each feel like companions to Premal's mantra albums, sharing the same tapestry of harmony and rhythm.

"However ***Inner Lover's*** finest moments come during Miten's originals. *Vertical Reality* features a terse bass line, adroit lyricism and the sort of chorus that reminds you that above all else Miten is a songwriter, a man who understands how to find a melody that embeds itself in your consciousness. Music to dance and feel to.

"A pair of acoustic songs, *Second Chance* and *Connection*, find Miten at his most intimate. Recorded spontaneously in the studio one morning, they feature just him and guitar. They are honest, modest songs full of forgiveness and joy. When he sings during *Second Chance* to "forgive yourself for the things you tried and

failed to do," the listener feels as if they are intruding on a performance almost too personal to commit to tape.

"However the most powerful vocals come during *Heartbeat*, a simple song of thanks to his Master that is transformed by some remarkable singing. Here he reaches deep into himself for a performance as potent as anything he has ever recorded. When he sings of traveling "this winding road," you feel his joy every inch of the way – and yes, even his need for the gift he's received.

"Miten has indeed seen a lot of musical road. His journey has taken him from the pared down acoustics of ***Strength of a Rose***, the dance rhythms of ***Global Heart Native Soul***, the joyful funk-reggae of ***Dance of Life*** and the singer-songwriter lyricism of ***Blown Away***. However ***Songs for The Inner Lover*** brings together all four into a exhilarating whole. When Miten advises on *Second Chance* to "pick up a musical instrument or plant a seed," you have to be glad that he chose to let someone else tend the garden, while he picked up his guitar and came forth with such beautiful, joyful and moving music.

Paul Blake.

[Paul Blake is the editor at the new media company, 3. He was formerly Editorial Director of the web portal vnunet.com, and before that Editorial Director of Internet.com UK.]

Deva Premal and Miten SATSANG

by Lloyd Barde, Common Ground, Marin County, California

A live recording from concerts by the serene, spirited duo of Miten and Deva Premal. While her beautiful chants are included, his love songs are also heard, and the combining of the two makes for a loving, perfect balance. All is offered in the spirit of meditation, as an hour-long program of song and silence. With Tibetan bells, humming, and extra space between selections, it works surprisingly well for healing, finding that simple space, and as respite from our busy lives. Some past favorites from Premal's three previous masterpieces are heard. Equal parts Paul Simon, Sanskrit chants, spiritual lovesongs & divine coupling, this is enchanting music and the next best thing to being there!